



The Harriman Corridor

It's not so far-fetched to imagine towns on the park's west side as a tourist destination.

[READ MORE ON PAGE 9](#)



Stop the Spread

The fight against invasive species starts with you and a boot brush.

[READ MORE ON PAGE 11](#)



TRAILWALKER

Summer 2015

New York-New Jersey Trail Conference – Connecting People with Nature since 1920

www.nynjtc.org

Volunteers Break Trail Conference Record for Service Hours Donated

Trail Conference volunteers generously give their time to build, protect, and promote access to nature. Whether it's a few hours welcoming visitors at our new headquarters or entire weekends creating a new hiking path, their efforts make accomplishing the Trail Conference mission possible. Our volunteers always answer the call, but something unprecedented happened last year: In 2014, these selfless people gave a whopping 93,214 hours of their time. That's a Trail Conference record!

Volunteers from Columbia Business School and Buffalo State University joined our efforts in relocating and rebuilding the Appalachian Trail on Bear Mountain. Students from Ramapo College and employees from UPS made trails more sustainable in the Ramapo Valley County Reservation and other parks in New Jersey. And our 909 volunteer maintainers from across the region continue to keep more than 2,000 miles of trails open and safe.

We feel like climbing Bald Mountain next to our new HQ here in Mahwah and shouting, "Thank you!"

Newer crews, like the Long Distance Trails Crew, relocated the Long Path on Romer Mountain in the Catskills, while our Backcountry Trails Conservation Corps working in Fahnestock and Sterling Forest State Parks made significant contri-



AmeriCorps member Joe Knight taught volunteers from the Groundwork Hudson Green Team about cribwall techniques last summer.

butions to improving these popular recreation areas. And then there's the West Hudson South Crew, which continues to be a mainstay in Harriman State Park, rehabbing some of the most popular trails in New York State.

Award-winning volunteers like Kay Cynamon from the Publications Committee donated their expertise to GPS-ing and researching trails for the first digitally produced edition of the South Taconic Trails map. Members of our Conservation Committee helped score big wins for green space protection, including aiding in the preservation of a tract of land in Chester, N.Y., that improves the Highlands Trail experience. And volunteer Alice

Luddington-Cantor and others spent countless hours ensuring that our dreams of moving into the Darlington Schoolhouse became a reality this spring.

Our volunteers really go above and beyond. That's why we feel like climbing Bald Mountain next to our new HQ here in Mahwah and shouting "thank you" for hikers everywhere to hear. Those two words can't be said enough.

Congratulations for accomplishing so much in 2014 and THANK YOU for all the work already completed in 2015!



93,214 total service hours in 2014 performed by 1,740 volunteers

Summit Steward Program Launches in Catskill Park

The New York-New Jersey Trail Conference and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) in collaboration with the Catskill 3500 Club launched a seasonal Summit Steward Program in the Catskill Park in June. The 2015 pilot program focuses on Slide Mountain, the Catskills' highest summit and one of its most popular destinations.

The Summit Stewards, hired and managed by the Trail Conference and supported by a generous gift from the Catskill 3500 Club, spend weekends from the start of summer through Columbus Day at the top of Slide Mountain. The Stewards are trained in Leave No Trace backcountry ethics and educated about fragile summit elevation environment and



the history and importance of the Catskill Park and Forest Preserve. They greet, inform, and assist the public, as well as help DEC Forest Rangers respond to emergencies in the area.

"We take our role as a hiking group devoted not only to visiting, but also protecting the Catskills summits very seriously," said Jim Bouton, Chair of the Catskill 3500 Club's Summit Stewardship Committee. "We hope that this program not only succeeds but is replicated at other Catskills peaks in the future."



Trail Conference Wins Two Awards for Historic Preservation



The restoration of the Darlington Schoolhouse as the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference's new headquarters wasn't just an incredible achievement for the organization—it was a huge historic preservation win for the local community of Mahwah, for Bergen County, and for the state of New Jersey. In recognition of this accomplishment, the Trail Conference received two awards in 2015 acknowledging the outstanding restoration and repurposing of the 124-year-old landmark: the Bergen County Historic Preservation Award for adaptive use and one of 10 prestigious New Jersey Historic Preservation awards.

Key to winning the awards was the Trail Conference meeting its three main objectives in the restoration project: to preserve and return to active use the Darlington Schoolhouse; to minimize the environmental cost of the headquarters in construction and operation; and to create a convenient workplace that is enjoyable for employees, volunteers, and visitors. Volunteer Alice Luddington-Cantor, who helps manage the grants given to the Trail Conference for work on the schoolhouse, nominated the organization for the state award.

The Trail Conference won an award from Bergen County and another from the state of New Jersey.

Both awards were presented to the Trail Conference in May as part of National Preservation Month. Board Chair Chris Connolly, Membership and Development Director Don Weise, Membership and Development Manager Jennifer Easterbrook, and volunteers Pasquale Marcotullio and Pete Heckler represented the Trail Conference at the Bergen County ceremony, hosted by the Bergen County Division of Cultural and Historic Affairs and Historic Preservation Advisory Board, on May 7 at the Varick Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church of Hackensack. Trail Conference Executive Director Edward Goodell accepted the state award, presented by the N.J. State Historic Preservation Office in the Department of Environmental Pro-

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Mission Statement

The New York-New Jersey Trail Conference is a federation of member clubs and individuals dedicated to providing recreational hiking opportunities in the region, and representing the interests and concerns of the hiking community. The Conference is a volunteer-directed public service organization committed to:

- Developing, building, and maintaining hiking trails.
- Protecting hiking trail lands through support and advocacy.
- Educating the public in the responsible use of trails and the natural environment.

Board of Directors

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Joshua Howard	Deputy Executive Director
Don Weise	Development Director
Melissa McCutcheon	Operations & Finance Director
Linda Rohleder	Land Stewardship Director

For a full list of staff visit
www.nynjtc.org/content/staff

The New York-New Jersey Trail Conference is a volunteer, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. It is a federation of 103 hiking and outdoor groups, and 10,000 individuals.

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Long-Awaited Catskill Interpretive Center Set to Open in July



Elected officials attended the groundbreaking of the Catskill Interpretive Center in September 2014.

After decades of planning, the Trail Conference and other regional partners are eagerly preparing for the grand opening of the Maurice D. Hinchey Catskill Interpretive Center (CIC) this July. Retired Congressman Maurice D. Hinchey championed the center from his time as the region's representative in the New York State Assembly. The CIC will provide information to visitors about the 700,000-acre Catskill Park, New York City's one million-acre Catskill/Delaware drinking watershed, and ways to recreate and enjoy these treasured natural resources.

The CIC will be managed by the Catskill Center and will be staffed through a partnership including the Trail Conference, Catskill Mountain Club, Ulster County Tourism, and Catskill Mountainkeeper. The Trail Conference has committed to providing staff at the CIC at least two days a week.

Trail Stewards Return for Another Season of Helping Hikers on Breakneck Ridge



Trail Stewards will be stationed at Breakneck Ridge on weekends through Labor Day.

The Trail Conference's 2015 Breakneck Ridge Trail Stewards have been stationed along the "most popular trail in North America" since May, eager to equip visitors with maps and information on safe hiking, hiking etiquette, suggested trail routes, and how to support trails in our region. Five trail stewards will be assisting hikers during the high-traffic weekends on Breakneck Ridge through the Labor Day Weekend.

Over the Memorial Day Weekend, the Stewards helped field one rescue and turned away 31 people unprepared for the strenuous hike. They counted 1,755 hikers

on Saturday; 1,411 on Sunday; and 1,111 on Monday for a total of 4,277 Breakneck visitors. That's nearly double the number of hikers at the popular trailhead compared to the same weekend last year!

If you're planning a trip to Breakneck Ridge, say hello to our 2015 Stewards: from left, Rich Zayas, Kali Bird, Brian Tragno, Ben Egan, and Eli Fry. The Stewards will be sharing photos and experiences via the Trail Conference Twitter account: twitter.com/NYNJTC. Follow us to keep up with weekend news from Breakneck.

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When you shop Amazon.com, make sure you shop AmazonSmile. It's the same shopping experience you know and love, only Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of eligible purchases to the Trail Conference—at no cost to you! Bookmark this link smile.amazon.com/ch/22-6042838 and support us every time you shop. Thank you to our AmazonSmile supporters for raising \$77.08 in the first quarter in 2015!

NOTICE OF REGULAR MEETING

The Board of Directors of the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference has called a Regular Meeting to take place Thursday, October 22, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. at the Trail Conference headquarters, 600 Ramapo Valley Road in Mahwah, N.J.

NOTICE OF PROPOSED BYLAW AMENDMENTS

Proposed amendments to the bylaws of the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference may be found at nynjtc.org/bylaws2015. These proposed amendments shall be submitted for adoption at the Regular Meeting on October 22.

Department of Clarifications: In the Spring 2015 *Trail Walker* In Memoriam, Robert Newton was said to have worked on the construction of the Appalachian Trail in New Jersey and served as Secretary on the Trail Conference Board of Directors. To clarify, he worked on the reroute of the A.T. from Wawayanda State Park to High Point, which took the trail off paved roads and onto a protected trail corridor, in the 1970s and early '80s. He served on the Trail Conference Board from 1991 to 1998 and again from 2002 to 2005. During part of this period in the '90s, he served as Secretary.

Board, Delegate Nominations for 2015

The Nominations Committee of the Trail Conference presents the following candidates for the Board of Directors for three-year terms and Delegates-at-Large for one-year terms. These nominations will be voted on at the Annual Meeting to be held on October 22, 2015, at the Trail Conference Headquarters (600 Ramapo Valley Rd., Mahwah, N.J.).

For Board of Directors

Christopher Connolly

Chris, of Tenafly, N.J., joined the board in 2005. A Trail Conference Life Member, Chris is completing five years as board chair and is leading implementation of the restructuring of the trail committees. He is trail supervisor, N.J. Palisades; conservation chair for the North Jersey-Ramapo chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club; member, New Hampshire 4000 Footer Club; a Long Trail end-to-ender; and on the administrative council of the Palisades Nature Association.

Gaylord Holmes

Gaylord, of Irvington, N.Y., joined the board in 2009. He chairs the Strategic Planning Committee and co-lead the steering committee on the restructuring of the trail committees. Gaylord is a trail maintainer and is a member of the board of directors of the Greater Irvington Land Trust. A graduate of the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, Gaylord earned an MBA at the University of Virginia. He is a former director, Global Aviation, Citibank in New York, with prior assignments to London and Tokyo.

David P. Stuhr

Dave, of Ho-Ho-Kus, N.J., is a Trail Conference Life Member and, since 1973, an active Boy Scout leader. As an adviser to the Order of the Arrow he helped develop the Palisades Historic Trail that includes portions of the Shore Trail and the Long Path. Dave joined the board in 2011 and chairs the audit committee. Dave has been a member of the Faculty of Business of Fordham University and has held several administrative posts, most recently associate vice president for academic affairs. He retired in 2011, but continues on a part-time basis as senior faculty adviser and emeritus associate professor of finance and economics.

Suzan Gordon

Suzan, of Tenafly, N.J., joined the board in 2013 and is a Trail Conference Life Member with an extensive history of volunteer service on trails and with the North Jersey-Ramapo chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club. She served many years as co-supervisor in Sterling Forest State Park. Suzan has a master's degree in special education from Temple University and taught special education for 24 years. She is an adjunct professor at William Paterson College.

Jeffrey Senterman

Jeff, of Platte Clove, N.Y., joined the Trail Conference staff in 2011, taking on the then-new position of program coordinator for the Catskill region; in 2013 Jeff was named Senior Program Coordinator. In addition to bringing environmental planning to his post, Jeff has a lifetime of experience as a trail volunteer under the tutelage of his father, longtime Catskills Trails Chair Pete Senterman. On July 1, Jeff will leave Trail Conference employment to become the Associate Director of the Catskill Center.

Delegates-at-Large

Therese Allen	Paul Makus
Susan Barbuto	Margo Moss
Cliff Berchtold	Karen Rose
Norman Blumenstein	Robert Ross
Jane Daniels	Ruth Rosenthal
Jack Driller	Mellonie Sanborn
Harvey Fishman	Frank Schoof
Bob Fuller	Karl Soehnlein
Pete Heckler	Douglas Sohn
Jill Hamell	Daniel Van Engel
Rob Lehmann	Robert Ward
Mark Liss	

From the Executive Director



Why Membership Matters

Members of the Trail Conference form a solid foundation upon which our volunteers and staff secure, develop, and protect more than 2,000 miles of hiking trails and open space preserves. When it's time to renew your Trail Conference membership, you'll notice basic dues are increasing by \$10 starting in July. This is our first increase in eight years, and the new amount will still be lower than all of our peer organizations. However, I certainly recognize that hardly anyone likes to see costs go up. With that in mind, it's time to remember why membership is so vital to our mission.

Membership inspires our 1,740 volunteers (and their 93,000-plus volunteer hours!) to keep the trails safe and outdoor experiences enjoyable. The efforts of our volunteers convert every dollar contributed into \$3 worth of results. Their "no-sweat" work ethic is just an act—there's plenty of sweat out on the trails, and at our headquarters, too.

Your membership allows our staff the ability to organize, mobilize, and educate not only volunteers, but the general public. We want everyone to understand and honor the responsible use of the trails. That

includes acting as advocates and ensuring our members' voices are heard as we passionately protect your interests as a hiker, nature lover, and outdoors enthusiast.

Membership comes with tangible perks, too, like discounts on our award-winning maps and guide books and a free subscription to the *Trail Walker* in your hands. And don't forget discounts at a number of our retail partners.

My personal motivation for being a member and supporting our mission is that the more people connect with nature, the more they will make protecting nature a high priority in their lives. I believe our relationship with nature will be the defining challenge for humanity over the next century, and I want to make a positive impact today.

Membership inspires our volunteers to keep the trails safe and outdoor experiences enjoyable.

Other people value their Trail Conference membership for different reasons. I recently took an informal poll asking why membership matters and got these responses:

- "When I get a chance to get out, I know that I can depend on good information about where to go and, more likely than not, the destination will feature well-maintained and very enjoyable trail networks. Having 2,000 miles of trails available at my fingertips in this region... it's priceless."

- "We should take better care of our remaining forests and open space, but it is hard to make a difference on my own. My membership in the Trail Conference allows me to join with others to support state park budgets and keep casinos out."

- "I like how volunteer involvement in the Trail Conference stretches my support. I can't do much beyond my membership but I like supporting the volunteers since I can't get out there myself."

- "The workshops are excellent and free! I learned more than I could have imagined about what actually goes into a good trail at Trail U. And the invasives work trips are like a botany course, only more fun."

- "I love the discounts for Trail Conference members at area stores. A 10% discount on just one big purchase can pay for membership all year long. Kind of makes me feel greedy and charitable at the same time."

- "There must be millions of people who've enjoyed these trails over the years. We all need to do our share to keep that going. This is an easy and inexpensive way for me to give back."

Whatever your rationale for being a member, I want to thank you for joining in this endeavor. Our maps may show us the trailheads that are the gateway to nature, but our members are the blazes that guide us.

— Edward Goodell
Executive Director
goodell@nynjtc.org

PEOPLE FOR TRAILS



Raina Stoutenburg
New Rochelle, N.Y.

Raina Stoutenburg spent the summer of 2014 working on a Trail Conference trail crew through AmeriCorps. That fall, she returned to the teaching profession but missed doing trail work; she soon started helping out trail crews on the weekends. That's when a friend told her that the Trail Conference was looking for a trail supervisor for the Central South Westchester region—and she jumped at the opportunity.

What parks do you oversee as supervisor? I am responsible for supervising the maintainers of trail systems in three locations: Cranberry Lake, Merestead, and Westmoreland. Since starting, I have met with several of the maintainers and spent time walking each of their trails with them—a great way to get to know both them and their trails. While we walked, we talked about the work they have done and some possible improvements that could be made in the future. They're wonderful people who are very dedicated to keeping our trails well-maintained!

What was the first project you took on in your new role? I started at Cranberry Lake by meeting Daniela Ciatto, the curator there, who has been really helpful and supportive. I went there in early spring to fix a step on a bird observation tower and to get to know the trails and their needs. I found some areas that needed new trail markers and some downed trees that would need a chainsaw to remove.

Why is the position a good fit for you? It's nice being able to make decisions and solutions for trails, as well as doing some of the trail work. While part of my job is to make sure the maintainers do their jobs and hand in their paperwork, I also need to make suggestions, do repairs, and work with the staff at each park to maintain and improve the trails. From getting a chance to build and fix beautiful trails, to getting to work outdoors, to getting to spend my time with some great people, there were so many reasons to love working on the trails!

We're still looking for trail maintainers in this region. If you're interested, please contact Volunteer Coordinator John Leigh (jleigh@nynjtc.org, 201.512.9348 x22).

TRAIL NEWS ROUNDUP



Long Path/SRT Reopens After Massive Wildfire

On May 3, a brush fire in Summitville, N.Y., quickly ignited into a wildfire that would eventually burn 2,600 acres across the Shawangunk Ridge. Firefighters from around the region battled the blaze, which grew so large that an air tanker from Canada—the first of its kind deployed in New York State—was called in to support the effort.

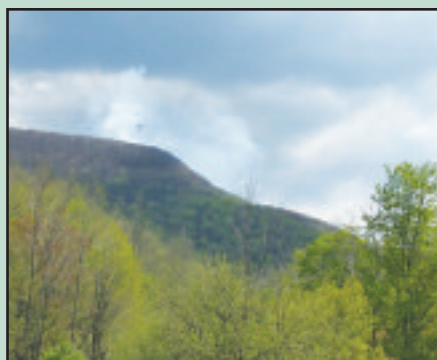
The blaze—which ignited when a homeowner ignored a burn ban—was under control within a week, but the damage had been done to the forest. The land along the Long Path and Shawangunk Ridge Trail was scorched, trail markers were melted, and the Jack Hennessey memorial was no more.

Once the area was safe, the Trail Conference's dedicated Long Path co-chairs Jakob Franke and Andy Garrison were out assessing the scene. By the end of the month, these volunteers had already reblazed the trail, once again proving their commitment to the LP/SRT and the hikers who enjoy it.

First Responders Thanked for Controlling Hunter Mt. Wildfire

The first responders who controlled a number of forest fires throughout the Catskill region this spring, including a blaze on Hunter Mountain that burned roughly 150 acres, were officially thanked by the newly chartered Catskill Park Advisory Committee (CPAC) in May.

"In response to one of the largest forest fires in the Catskills in recent memory, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Forest Rangers, State Police, and the many, many volunteers from local fire departments deserve a huge amount of gratitude for their efforts," said Jeff Senterman, Committee Chair. The fire began on Heavenly Valley Road off Route 214 in Lanesville on May 7. Trails in the area were reopened by the end of May.



CPAC was established by the Trail Conference and the Catskill Center for Conservation and Development in consultation with the NYS DEC to provide assistance, advice, and guidance in the management of the New York State Forest Preserve, the Catskill Park, and the Catskill Watershed.

Catskill Park Coalition Secures \$500K for Catskill Region

Through the leadership efforts of New York State Senators Jim Seward and George Amedore, the Trail Conference and the Catskill Park Coalition (CPC) are pleased to announce funding of \$500,000 in this year's New York State budget to promote economic growth and preservation measures for the Catskill Park. This particular funding for the park was the primary request of the coalition's annual lobby day, Catskill Park Awareness Day.

The line item for the Catskill Park will be used for comprehensive planning, land acquisition, stewardship, and a grant program for small businesses.

AMC to Open New Camp in Harriman

The Trail Conference is delighted that one of its founding members, the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC), will be opening a new outdoor program center at Harriman State Park in summer 2016. AMC will be renovating a former youth camp on Breakneck Pond and offering group programs such as hiking, paddling, and camping. Numerous AMC groups will use the center, including AMC-led youth outdoor education and leadership programs, as well as chapter-led programs open to the general public.

AMC already maintains 90 miles of trails as a Trail Conference member club. With this increased presence in Harriman and Bear Mountain, AMC expects to increase its trail stewardship under the Trail Conference umbrella. We welcome the help and look forward to continuing our long and productive relationship.



Save the Date! Catskills Volunteer Appreciation Picnic and Lark in the Park



The Catskills Volunteer Appreciation Picnic will be held Saturday, September 12, from 11:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the soon-to-be opened Catskill Interpretive Center in Mount Tremper, N.Y. At this free event, the Trail Conference and the

Catskill Conservation Corps will be welcoming all Catskills volunteers with burgers, hot dogs, refreshments,

regional information, and more, all the while giving you a chance to explore the new Catskill Interpretive Center and its grounds. Learn more at nynjtc.org/event/catskill-conservation-corps-volunteer-appreciation-picnic.

The 2015 Catskills Lark in the Park will be held Saturday, October 3, through Monday, October 12. Since its inception in 2004, the Lark has brought together people and organizations participating in hundreds of events aimed at celebrating and heightening awareness of the

Catskill Mountains region of New York State and the Catskill Park. Activities annually include organized hikes, bicycle trips, paddles, service, and cultural and educational events. The coordination of this event is managed through a partnership between the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference, the Catskill Mountain Club, The Catskill Center, and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. For updates on this year's event, visit catskillslark.org.

Trail Conference Receives Over \$107K in Grants to Build and Improve Trails in Our Area



GEORGETTE WEIR

Our work in the Catskills is funded in part by a grant from the Dyson Foundation.

Thanks to the generosity of the following organizations, the Trail Conference is able to further our mission throughout the region.

REI

A \$20,000 grant from REI will support the work of the Trail Conference's Long Path/Shawangunk Ridge Trail Spike Crew serving on projects throughout Sullivan and Ulster counties in New York State. AmeriCorps members and volunteers will use sustainable trail-building techniques to create, maintain, and improve sections of trail along the Long Path and SRT.

Conservation Partnership Program

Along the Long Path and Highlands Trail, the Trail Conference will work toward creating a greenway that will provide a protected corridor connecting Sterling Forest State Park, Goose Pond Mountain State Park, Schunemunk Mountain State Park, Black Rock Forest, and Storm King State Park. This project has been made possible by a \$20,000 grant from the Land Trust Alliance through funding by New York State via the DEC. Our role will be to contact landowners, land agency partners, and municipalities; scope potential trail routes; and obtain surveys, appraisals, and environmental assessments for trail easement and land parcel acquisitions.

L.L.Bean

Through funding from L.L.Bean, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy has awarded the Trail Conference two grants totaling \$2,560. The Trail Conference will replace timber steps at the Appalachian Trail trailhead near the Harlem Valley Appalachian Trail community and make other trail improvements.

The Dyson Foundation

In the Catskills, the Trail Conference will maintain both a full-time and part-time regional coordinator to manage volunteers and work closely with state and municipal agencies, chambers of commerce, and community groups to enhance, promote, and advocate for open space. This work has been made possible by a \$50,000 grant from the Dyson Foundation. The Trail Conference's Catskill Community Trails Program is designed to spur local economic development by making public open space in Catskill Park more accessible and appealing, and by engaging local residents in the stewardship of the Catskill Mountain Region's trails.

The Peter and Carmen Lucia Buck Foundation

The Trail Conference was awarded \$15,000 from the PCLB Foundation to create and host a series of specialized Trail U workshops to support the needs of land trusts in New York State. With their support, we will collaborate with the Mohonk Preserve to design and present workshops to assist their needs for volunteer recruitment and training, invasive species monitoring and control, design and construction of kiosks and signage, trail inventory and assessment, and other pertinent workshops.

TRAIL CONFERENCE SUPPORTERS

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February 7 - May 7, 2015

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In honor of Rebecca Zadeck's Bat Mitzvah
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In memory of Joan Ebnrenfeld
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In memory of Judy Weiner, avid biker, outdoors person & supporter of the Trail Conference
From your friends

In memory of Rita Heckler
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Tributes are only printed for donations of \$25 or more.

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February 7 - May 7, 2015

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IN MEMORIAM

A Tribute to Judy Weiner

By Judy Kossover

On Jan. 2, 2015, Judy Weiner of Cliffside Park, N.J., passed away after fighting a difficult battle with lung cancer. However, Judy had a zest for life that not even cancer could quell.

When I think about my friend, several words are most explicit in describing her: excellence, enthusiastic, humble, and intelligent. Whether Judy was working—she was a translator for the United Nations and in private industry, and later taught ESL—hiking, biking, or traveling, these words describe her. She excelled in all of her endeavors and she loved what she did.

Whether Judy was working, hiking, biking, or traveling... she excelled in all of her endeavors and she loved what she did.

Judy was an incredible biker, going on trips of 100 miles per day. Eventually she also became a hiker, and a very good one, as she belonged to the Catskill 3500 Club. Judy was a Life Member of the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference and for a time served as the 3500 Club's Trail Conference liaison. She was a great outdoors enthusiast and frequent participant in the Wednesday Hiking group around Harri-

Rita Heckler

The Trail Conference recognizes with great sadness the passing of Rita M. Heckler (nee Arpino) of Wanaque, N.J., on April 3, 2015. Rita was born in Bronx, N.Y., and lived in Oradell and Wanaque, N.J. She and her husband Peter have been avid, longtime members, volunteers, and supporters of the Trail Conference, as well as members of the Interstate Hiking Club. Rita served as de facto coordinator and peacekeeper at many Trail Conference events.

Rita worked for Con Edison of New York for 24 years before retiring in 1995. She was a parishioner of St. Francis R.C. Church in Haskell, N.J. She will be greatly missed.



man State Park, meeting many friends over the years on the trails.

Because Judy spoke so many languages so well, she enjoyed traveling to foreign countries, whether it was for work or for pleasure. She lived in Israel for a while, spent a summer in Poland, and made numerous trips to France. Judy also combined her love of hiking with her language skills, and in one year went on four hiking trips with her friend Ellen Blumenkrantz, several of which were international. How she enjoyed those trips!

This past Thanksgiving Judy came out to East Hampton to spend the holiday with my husband Jack and I. The three of us had a wonderful time together. We even did some hiking, as Judy wanted to get back into it. About the trip Judy wrote, "I keep raving about my wonderful Thanksgiving weekend at the Hamptons. It was really great."

My world became a richer place for Judy being part of it. She will be greatly missed by all of her friends.

5% Day Benefits Trail Conference

Whole Foods Market recently invited the Trail Conference to take part in one of its community giving days, known as a 5% Day. Trail Conference representatives deployed to the Paramus, Ridgewood, and Edgewater Whole Foods Market stores on April 8 to engage and educate shoppers about the Trail Conference mission of connecting people with nature. Five percent of the day's net profits from each of these stores was then earmarked to support Trail Conference programs. It was a great honor to be chosen for a Whole Foods 5% Day this year and to be recognized in the communities where we work. We thank Whole Foods Market for this wonderful opportunity and for the generous contribution of \$17,427.84 from our neighbors and friends who shop there.

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View our complete hike schedule at
www.hudsonhikers.org

Join us on Facebook at North Jersey-Ramapo ADK
and on Meetup at NJR-Adirondack-Mountain-Club

Trail Conference Officially Opens Headquarters; Raises Over \$36K During Ribbon-Cutting Challenge



PHIL CANTOR PHOTOGRAPHY

Local officials and neighbors joined Trail Conference staff and volunteers in celebrating the official opening of the organization's headquarters at Darlington Schoolhouse.

On April 7, the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference officially opened our new headquarters at the Darlington Schoolhouse in Mahwah, N.J., with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. The celebration merging the 124-year-old schoolhouse and the 95-year-old Trail Conference allowed us to introduce the organization to the local community in a way never before possible. As we breathe new life into this beloved historic landmark, we're looking forward to serving our neighbors in exciting new ways—from providing maps and information about the adjacent Ramapo Valley County Reservation, to hosting a new 5K race with the Mahwah Regional Chamber of Commerce.

In honor of this important moment in the Trail Conference's history, an anonymous donor pledged to match fifty cents to every dollar donated to the organization by April 10. Thanks to this generous act, \$36,105 was raised during our Ribbon-Cutting Challenge to build trails, maintain trails, and help people use trails. Thank you all for your support!

Get the New Ramapo Valley County Reservation Map



In conjunction with the opening of our new headquarters at the Darlington Schoolhouse, the Trail Conference has produced an updated map of Ramapo Valley County Reservation. The Reservation is directly adjacent to the new headquarters and contains more than 17 miles of marked trails, with many trails continuing into neighboring state and county parkland.

The new map prominently identifies our Trail Conference headquarters; features the new pink-blazed Reservoir Loop, which has been put in place by our trail crews over the past two years; and includes a detailed inset of the area around our headquarters

and the Reservation entrance.

The map is available in a variety of formats, including:

- Water-resistant/tear-resistant paper map at our headquarters store
- Free download on our website (nynjtc.org/view/maps)
- Free app map on Apple and Android devices through the PDF Maps app (nynjtc.org/pdfmaps).

So when you're heading out to the Ramapo Reservation, be sure to visit the store at our new headquarters and ask about this great map.

Events at Our HQ

Join Us for a Grand Opening Celebration

We moved in. We cut the ribbon. This fall, we're having a party! Join the Trail Conference on Saturday, September 12, as we celebrate our first trail season in our new offices at the historic Darlington Schoolhouse. This Grand Opening is a public event that will feature guided tours, hikes, and fun at our headquarters. As we ring in our 95th year of service, come enjoy our beautiful facility. We absolutely could not have gotten this far without the support of our members and supporters like you!

Join the Trail Conference as We Celebrate our Volunteers Nov. 7

The Trail Conference depends upon a large group of dedicated volunteers to accomplish its mission. On Saturday, November 7, from 1 p.m. to 6:15 p.m., we will salute some of these wonderful members who have done exceptional work. We are planning an afternoon of workshops, awards presentations, and a reception at our Celebrating Our Volunteers event. The list of topics and speakers is being developed, but workshops may include: cartography, trail design, medical tips, GPS/map and compass, invasive species, natural or local history, and ways to run an outreach table.

The afternoon will also provide an opportunity for members to visit the new Trail Conference headquarters at the Darlington Schoolhouse. Advance registration is required, there is a \$10 registration fee, and space is limited to 100 members.

Sign up for our digital newsletter, *E-Walker*, and check nynjtc.org throughout the summer for updates about both events, which will be held at our new headquarters at 600 Ramapo Valley Road in Mahwah, N.J.



Volunteers Share "Trail Magic" During Office Move

By Melissa McCutcheon

Many hikers are familiar with the term "trail magic," the serendipitous acts of kindness usually expressed toward thru-hikers. But did you know these kinds of selfless acts happen right here in the Trail Conference offices as well? It's an incredible thing to experience! A donor or volunteer will step up from seemingly out of nowhere and offer a gift that saves the day. In fact, as an organization, we work day-to-day with this spirit of trust, knowing that if we are doing good work, good people will join in and support us.

Volunteers Kevin Foster and Patricia Watson stole the show during the move.

That magic happened in a big way this March, when we faced the daunting task of moving our offices. Our phones began ringing off the hook with volunteers wanting to help pack, purge, clean, gather, organize, and otherwise lend a hand in any way they could. As usual, volunteers led the charge to best utilize our storage space, dismantle the library, or shop for high-efficiency appliances.

Volunteers Kevin Foster and Patricia Watson really stole the show, gladly and generously offering the exact professional expertise we needed to organize, upgrade, and relocate all of our files and systems. Patricia took ownership of combing through our archival materials, much of which hadn't been touched since our last move out of NYC over a decade ago. Kevin was invaluable technologically and logistically as acting coordinator of all the different processes and people involved.

It all worked out—and we finally moved in to our beautiful offices at the Darlington Schoolhouse. Call it inspiration, blessing, karma, or luck, but the Trail Conference absolutely relies on it! Come visit us at our new headquarters and maybe give or receive a little magic of your own.



DANIELLE RICHARDS PHOTOGRAPHY

Racing for Trails: Inaugural MRCC/Trail Conference 5K a Success

The first annual Mahwah Regional Chamber of Commerce/ New York-New Jersey Trail Conference 5K Race & 1.5 Mile Walk was held Sunday, May 17, at the Trail Conference headquarters. The race, which toured the local neighborhood and followed trails through the scenic Ramapo Valley County Reservation, was a great way to introduce the work of the Trail Conference to the local community. "We had much greater participation than expected—over 280 runners and walkers and many generous sponsors," said Trail Conference Membership and Development Director Don Weise, who coordinated the event. "Thanks to MRCC and all the volunteers and staff who made this a success." Proceeds from the event benefitted both the Trail Conference and the MRCC.

People for Trails. Trails for People.

A quarterly look at some of what we have been doing to improve public access to nature.

Corporate Volunteer Groups Ditch the Cubicle to Give Back to Trails



Viacom employees volunteered with the Long Distance Trails Crew on May 15.

On a warm, sunny day in mid-May, 10 Viacom employees abandoned their cubicles in Midtown Manhattan for the tranquil hiking paths of Bear Mountain State Park. But these coworkers weren't playing hooky, and this outing wasn't your average walk through the woods—once at the Appalachian Trail, they donned hard hats and safety glasses, picked up pick mattocks, rock bars, and rakes, and got to work helping the Long Distance Trails Crew (LDTTC) reroute the trail.

These volunteers were taking part in Viacom Community Day, an annual, company-wide day of service. "When I found out about this opportunity, I jumped on it," said volunteer Joyeux Noel of Brooklyn, who is the supervising producer for LOGO Creative at MTV Networks. Noel regularly hikes through Hudson Highlands and Fahnestock State Parks, but didn't realize volunteer trail crews are often the ones tackling projects such as this A.T. relocation. "It's nice to give back," she said.

Risa Cohen, director of transmission and broadcast services for Viacom and a LDTTC member, organized the volunteer outing. "The entire crew was impressed by the enthusiasm of the group and the amount of work they accomplished," said Crew Leader Bob Fuller. "We enjoyed the opportunity to teach them trail-building skills and techniques. Several Viacom volunteers expressed interest in coming out with the crew again, and we hope to see them soon."

It's not uncommon for corporations to partner with the Trail Conference as a means for their employees to give back to the community. United Water workers recently helped improve trails in the Ramapo Valley County Reservation, while twice a year Avon employees join our volunteer efforts in refurbishing and reblazing neglected trail sections on the Long Path and other trails in Harriman and Sterling Forest State Parks. (Avon in return donated \$3,000 to help build bridges and perform other trail maintenance.)

"The Trail Conference couldn't do what we do if it weren't for the help of our corporate partner volunteer groups," said Trail Conference Volunteer Coordinator John Leigh. "Plus, employers find that company service days also provide a greater sense of teamwork and job satisfaction." After all, it takes cooperation from volunteers like Noel (pictured next to the highline) and her coworkers to lift 1,000-pound rocks!



"Clearly there is a community here," Viacom volunteer Joyeux Noel said of the Long Distance Trails Crew. "I find that special, and I'm happy to help out."

If your company would like to partner with the Trail Conference for a day of service, please contact John Leigh (jleigh@nynjtc.org, 201.512.9348 x22) for more info.

If you'd like to join the Long Distance Trails Crew for an outing, they're on the trails many weekends throughout the season. No experience is necessary; the crew provides on-the-job training and guarantees a fun and rewarding day for volunteers at any skill level. Contact Crew Chief Chris Reyling (chrisreyling@gmail.com, 914.953.4900) or Crew Leader Bob Fuller (refuller99@hotmail.com, 732.952.2162) for more information.

From Sterling Forest to the SRT, the 2015 Conservation Corps Crews Improve Trails

Members of the Trail Conference's 2015 Conservation Corps trail crews began training in May and are hard at work building and improving trails throughout the region all summer long. Here's what they're up to and where you can find—and join!—them on the trails this season.



Palisades Trail Crew nynjtc.org/palisadescrew

The AmeriCorps members of the Palisades Trail Crew—Kirsty Fuquay, Trudy Heinrichs, Kayla Hall, and Sabina Cardenas—are inviting volunteers to join them at Sterling Forest State Park. The Palisades Crew is working on the final segment of the Doris Duke Trail loop in the wilderness preserve of the same name. Thereafter, they will restore and repair existing trails, as well as build the new multi-use Eagle Mountain Trail in the southern part of the park. Field-based tread and drainage workshops will be held each month, giving attendees an in-depth understanding of the principles of drainage and erosion mitigation in the rainy Northeast.

Taconic Trail Crew nynjtc.org/taconiccrew

The Taconic Crew is serving in Fahnestock and Hudson Highlands state parks on the Appalachian Way Trail (a connector trail to the Appalachian Trail) and the Wilkinson Trail (the last leg of the very popular Breakneck Ridge Loop). The AmeriCorps members are Rebecca Radtke, Jake Rawdin, Matt Simonelli, and Chris Bush, whose work consists of rerouting, side-hilling, constructing stone steps and stepping stones, armoring, paving, and restoring trails. Rebecca explains, "We really dig trails, so we're really excited to be out there improving them."

The Megalithic Trail Crew nynjtc.org/bearmntntrails

The Megalithic Trail Crew has six AmeriCorps members serving on the Bear Mountain Trails Project (BMTTP) in 2015: Joseph Knight, Ellie Pelletier, Kevin Stamey, Jerrica Lavooy, Amanda Finley, and Michael Betros. They kicked off their season on the Upper East Face relocation of the Appalachian Trail (A.T.) on Bear Mountain, which is expected to be 60% complete by July. They will then move down to the Trails for People Interpretive Exhibit on the A.T. near the Bear Mountain Inn. The crew will finish this project by late fall, transforming the area into an educational plaza.

Long Path/Shawangunk Ridge Trail Crew nynjtc.org/content/long-path-shawangunk-ridge-trail-crew

The Long Path/Shawangunk Ridge Trail Spike Crew's AmeriCorps members—Stephen Buja, Lily Hurley, Christopher Wilson, and Porter Fitch—are working on trail projects throughout Sullivan and Ulster counties in New York State. The crew lives in tents, cooks under a kitchen tarp, and hikes to the worksite each day. Project sites include: the Mine Hole Trail, where sections of the footpath flood heavily in wet seasons; the South Gully Trail, which needs a quarter mile of sidehilling to provide erosion control; and sections of the Shawangunk Ridge Trail (SRT) south of Ferguson Road to manage flooding and erosion. In Huckleberry Ridge State Forest, the crew hopes to extend the Lenape Ridge Trail to connect to a new parking lot and build an additional mile of the SRT. You can find the LP/SRT crew at work through July.

Invasives Strike Force nynjtc.org/isfsummercrew

The Invasives Strike Force (ISF) Summer Crew AmeriCorps members—Shelby Timm, Cody Mendoza, Justin Dennis, and Brian Miglorino—help plan and lead the ISF Trail Crew's volunteer work trips and are slated to hold over a dozen work days this summer. They also serve as the Lower Hudson Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management's (PRISM) early detection species response team for invasive plants that are new to the area. The team will work in 17 parks in nine counties.



Our Conservation Corps trail crews are on the trails Friday through Monday. Most will be serving through mid-October. For more details and info on how to join them, visit nynjtc.org/view/trail-crew-outings.

ISF Celebrates I Love My Park Day



The Invasives Strike Force removed invasive species along the Old Croton Aqueduct on May 2 in celebration of I Love My Park Day.

Ramapo Trail Crew Teams Up with MEVO to Form the Ramapo Earth Crew

By Peter Dolan, New Jersey Program Coordinator

This spring, the Trail Conference and the Mahwah Environmental Volunteers Organization (MEVO) have teamed up to create the Ramapo Earth Crew, a partnership that combines our trailbuilding experience and resources with MEVO's strong youth volunteer presence. This new crew merges the Trail Conference's Ramapo Trail Crew with MEVO's Earth Crew.

The Ramapo Trail Crew started in 2014 as a means to engage students from the nearby Ramapo College, giving young recruits a chance to work side-by-side with Trail Conference veterans. Through project-based workshops, trip outings, and corporate partner volunteer days, over 1,000 hours of training and work were completed by the crew—about 650 hours of which were from Ramapo College students.

MEVO was founded in the summer of 2008 by a group of nature-loving teenagers to promote environmental sustainability in local communities. They plant trees, clean



up polluted areas, rehabilitate soil erosion, promote natural farming, and more. MEVO also has a history with the Trail Conference, as Executive Director Eric Fuchs-Stengel was himself a Bear Mountain trail builder.

After discovering that some volunteers' time was split between MEVO and Trail Conference projects, the organizations agreed that merging the crews was the best way forward. The new Ramapo Earth Crew has an exciting calendar of diverse work trips lined up for the summer, including non-trail volunteer projects and social events. Join the crew's Facebook group ([facebook.com/groups/RamapoTrailCrew/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/RamapoTrailCrew/)) or find upcoming events at nynjtc.org/content/ramapo-earth-crew.



No Matter What Nature Has in Store, the Catskill Conservation Corps Gets the Job Done

By Heather Rolland, Assistant Catskills Program Coordinator

We at the Catskill Conservation Corps have been working hard planning and organizing events, work trips, projects, and workshops. We've also been learning a lot as we forge ahead. Here are a few of the lessons we've been handed by Mother Nature.

Lesson 1: Be flexible! We used expert sources to schedule our knotweed event, discussing with experienced folks when this invasive species would most likely be at the ideal height. But the deep snow and lingering cold meant that the knotweed didn't emerge until much later than expected, forcing us to reschedule the work trip.

Lesson 2: Build in "slush" time! From the late snow to a wildfire on Hunter Mountain, unforeseen circumstances forced the rescheduling of several events, which meant we needed to move around other work trips. But we had scheduled events every weekend for almost a month straight, and the calendar looked totally booked. Through some wonderful flexibility on the part of the DEC staff, we've been able to get everything back on the calendar. If there's one thing we can predict, it's that we'll need to stay flexible!

Lesson 3: Variety is the spice of life! Providing a great "menu" of volunteer options is important to us. We are offering events in different geographic areas of the Catskills, half day events and full day events, weekday events and weekend trips, trail work, lean-to work, litter picking... basically, a wide variety of service projects that provide something for everyone.

Visit catskillconservationcorps.org for the latest news, volunteer opportunities, workshops, and work trips in the Catskills!



What's coming up?

June 13-14: Reroofing the Devil's Acre Lean-to

June 15: Trail project at Kaaterskill Falls

June 20: Intro to Trail Maintenance workshop

June 21: Father's Day litter pickup at Overlook Mountain

The Catskill Conservation Corps is a partnership between the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation providing volunteer opportunities to the public on projects that protect natural resources and enhance outdoor recreation opportunities in the Catskill Mountains.

Small Crew Tackles Big Barberry Invasion on the A.T.



On the Appalachian Trail at the Dennytown Road crossing in Fahnestock State Park, five volunteers cleared an impressive 50 feet of very heavy invasives growth on May 3. This Mitzvah Day project included the removal of barberry and multiflora rose approximately 10 feet on either side of the trail, with an additional five pounds of garlic mustard picked. Walt Daniels led the crew, which included (from left) Howard Susser, Ron Rosen, Paul Levine, and Eric Perfecto. "For all of the large clumps, we removed the stumps," Daniels reports. "The garlic mustard will need another pass next year, and the barberry may need to be cleaned up as well."



Volunteer Kay Cynamon Wins Parks & Trails Hero Award

Volunteer Kay Cynamon, who hiked and recorded the locations of more than 100 miles of marked trails for the Trail Conference's latest edition of the South Taconic Trails map, is a 2015 recipient of a Parks & Trails New York Parks & Trails Hero Award. For her efforts in bringing the most up-to-date information about the South Taconic Mountains to hikers—including serving as the map's project manager and researcher—she earned a Volunteer Service Award from Parks & Trails New York, a statewide advocate for parks and trails. "This is above and beyond, in view of all the amazing things that your 1,000 volunteers do for the organization," Cynamon told Trail Conference Cartographer Jeremy Apgar, who submitted her nomination. "But I am truly grateful."

Help Finish the South Taconic Trail Extension to Rudd Pond

In the most northern reaches of the Trail Conference's East Hudson Region lie the South Taconic trails. Recent land acquisitions have made it possible to extend the trail south to Rudd Pond in Miller-ton, N.Y., the natural starting point for the trail. The Trail Conference is hard at work on this extension, a route that requires building about five miles of brand new trail through open woods, hemlock groves, waterfalls, and rock ledges with open views.

The construction phase of this project will hopefully be completed by the end of 2015. Work will range from cutting and clearing with loppers and hand saws to heavier work like digging side hills and treadway smoothing—and we need your help!

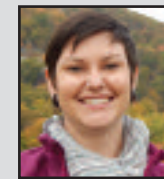
No previous experience is required; training is provided. Visit nynjtc.org/content/south-taconic-trail-extension for more information.



We want to hear from you! The Trail Conference is looking for photos and stories from the trails for our website and future editions of *Trail Walker*. Share your crew accomplishments, maintainer tips, hiking tales, or a great image from your favorite park. For inclusion in the fall *Trail Walker*, submissions must be received by August 15. For consideration, send content to tw@nynjtc.org.

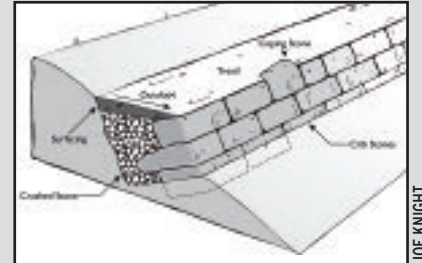
Ask a Trail Builder

By Ama Koenigshof, Trail Builder/Educator



I keep seeing stone walls built along trails. What are they for?

While stairs are for steepness, crib wall is for cross slope. Crib wall is the term trail builders use to define a (retaining) wall constructed to hold up the tread of the trail when the cross slope—the slope that is perpendicular to the direction of travel—is too steep to maintain a tread of the desired width. Crib wall may become necessary whether building across bedrock, rocky slopes, or even dirt. It can be built of stone or wood. Here in New York and New Jersey where we have a general surplus of rock, we tend to build our crib walls out of stone, keeping the ancient art of dry masonry alive. Constructing stone crib wall is something people tend to either instantly fall in love with or not. It has been compared to putting together a 3D puzzle whose pieces weigh hundreds of pounds. It is a constant evaluation of the positive and negative attributes of each rock and its contact with those surrounding it.



Key Terms

Bench: The surface that the stone sets on, sloped inward toward the back slope whenever possible. Could be mineral soil or bedrock, but never fill soil or organic matter.

Batter: The vertical lean that your crib wall has into the back slope. Example: For 3:1 batter, for every 3 feet you build up you build 1 foot back into the back slope.

Contact: Where one stone meets another stone. Contact should be high and outside.

Joints: The line between two or more stones that have contact. Vertical running joints create instability. Build two on one and one on two.

Base Tier: The first tier to go in. This tier should be buried when the crib wall is completed.

Keystone: The stone in a base tier off of which all other stones are built.

Dead Man: A stone laid perpendicular to the length of the wall extending into the back slope to provide stability. Place every 3-5 stones.

Cap Stone: Large, flat stones in the top tier at tread height.

Coping Stone: Stones that rise up higher than all other stones in the top tier and the tread height, keeping people away from the edge of the crib wall.

Shim or Plug: A stone that is placed in the wall between two larger stones to fill space where the two larger rocks do not have contact, keeping surfacing and backfill from escaping through the wall. Always shim or plug from the back.



Interested in learning more? Check out our Trail University schedule at nynjtc.org/view/workshops for a free crib wall construction course near you!

Hikers' Directory

Can't find your club? This list represents all Trail Conference member clubs whose dues are up-to-date. If you have questions about your club's status, please ask your officers to contact the Membership & Development team at 201-512-9348.

ADK Long Island www.adkli.org	East Coast Greenway Alliance www.greenwaynj.org	Monmouth County Park System www.monmouthcountyparks.com	Storm King Adventure Tours www.stormkingadventures.com
ADK Mid-Hudson Chapter www.midhudsonadk.org	East Hampton Trails Preservation Society www.ehtps.org	Morris County Park Commission www.morrisparks.net	Sullivan County Audubon Society www.sullivanaudubon.org
ADK Mohican Chapter www.adkmohican.org	Flat Rock Brook Nature Association www.flatrockbrook.org	Mosaic Outdoor Mountain Club www.mosaic-gny.org	SUNY Oneonta Outing Club www.oneonta.edu/outdoors
ADK New York Chapter www.adkny.org	Fox Hill School www.bruderhof.com/en/international-directory/united-states/fox-hill	Musconetcong Mountain Conservancy http://mmc.nynjtc.org	Teatown Lake Reservation www.teatown.org
ADK North Jersey Ramapo Chapter www.hudsonhikers.org	Friends of Garret Mountain http://friendsofgarretmountain.blogspot.com	Nassau Hiking and Outdoor Club www.nassauhiking.org	Tenafly Nature Center Association www.tenaflynaturecenter.org
Adventures for Women www.adventuresforwomen.org	Friends of Pelham Bay Park www.pelhambaypark.org	Nelsonville Greenway Committee VillageofNelsonville.org	The Highlands Natural Pool www.highlandsnaturalpool.org
Alley Pond Environmental Center www.alleypond.com	Friends of the Hackensack River Greenway in Teaneck www.teaneckgreenway.org	New Haven Hiking Club www.NHHC.info	The Nature Place Day Camp http://thenatureplace.com
AMC Delaware Valley Chapter www.amcdv.org	Friends of the Old Croton Aqueduct, Inc. http://aqueduct.org	New Jersey Search & Rescue Inc. www.njsar.org	The Outdoor Club, Inc. www.outdoorsclub.info
AMC Mohawk Hudson Chapter www.amcmohawkhudson.org	Friends of The Shawangunks http://shawangunks.org	New York City Audubon Society, Inc. www.nycaudobon.org	The Storm King School www.sks.org
AMC New York North Jersey Chapter www.amc-ny.org	Friends of Van Cortlandt Park http://vancortlandt.org	New York Ramblers www.nyramblers.org	Thendara Mountain Club www.thendaramountainclub.org
Bellvale School www.bruderhof.com/en/international-directory/united-states/bellvale	German-American Hiking Club http://gah.nynjtc.org	NYC Outward Bound Center www.nycoutwardbound.org	Town of Lewisboro www.lewisborogov.com/parksrec
Black Rock Forest Consortium Inc. www.blackrockforest.org	Greenburgh Nature Center www.greenburghnaturecenter.org	Protect Our Wetlands, Water & Woods (POWWW) http://box292.bluehost.com/~powwworg	Trail WhippAss www.trailwhippass.com
Boy Scout Troop 121, Hudson Valley Council	Hike for Mental Health www.hikeformentalhealth.org	Protectors of Pine Oak Woods www.siprotectors.org	Tri State Ramblers http://tsr.nynjtc.org
Boy Scout Troop 50 Mahwah MAHWAHTroop50.scoutlander.com	Hilltop Conservancy, Inc. www.hilltopconservancy.org	Rip Van Winkle Hikers http://newyorkheritage.com/rvw	University Outing Club www.universityoutingclub.org
Boy Scout Troop 8, Brooklyn	Hudson Highlands Gateway Task Force www.TownofCortlandt.com	Rock Lodge Club www.rocklodge.com	Valley Stream Hiking Club www.meetup.com/vshclub
Boy Scouts of America, Troop 21	Hunterdon Hiking Club www.hunterdonhikingclub.org	RPHC Volunteers www.rphcabin.org	Wappingers Greenway Trail Committee
Boy Scouts of America-Northern NJ Council www.nnjbsa.org	Interstate Hiking Club www.interstatehikingclub.org	SAJ - Society for the Advancement of Judaism http://www.thesaj.org	West Milford 13ers www.weishike.com
Byram Township Environmental Commission www.byramtwp.org	Little Stony Point Citizens Association www.littlestonypoint.org	Salt Shakers Trail Running Club www.saltshakersrun.com	Westchester Trails Association www.westhike.org
Catskill 3500 Club www.catskill-3500-club.org	Long Island Greenbelt Trail Conference www.ligreenbelt.org	Shorewalkers Inc. www.shorewalkers.org	Women About www.womenabout.org
Catskill Mountain Club www.catskillmountainclub.org	Long Path North Hiking Club www.schoharie-conservation.org	Sierra Club Mid-Hudson Group www.newyork.sierraclub.org/midhudson	WWW www.weishike.com
Chinese Mountain Club of New York www.cmcny.org	Mohonk Preserve www.mohonkpreserve.org	Southampton Trails Preservation Society http://southamptontrails.org	
Closter Nature Center Association www.closternaturecenter.org			

New Membership and Development Associate Brendan Cunningham



Brendan Cunningham is the new Membership and Development Associate, bringing to the Trail Conference five years of previous non-profit work with two years' experience in the development field. He had served as senior leadership consultant to the Phi Delta Theta International Fraternity at their headquarters in Oxford, Ohio. Previously, he served as an internet marketing strategist for a multinational real estate investment corporation based in Chevy Chase, Md. Brendan is a graduate of Washington College of Maryland, where he earned his B.A. in art history. As a Beacon, N.Y., resident with his wife Stephanie and son Declan, he enjoys hiking in the nearby Hudson Highlands with his family.

New Catskills Program Coordinator Doug Senterman



Doug Senterman, Catskills Program Coordinator, of Platte Clove (Elka Park) N.Y., joined the Trail Conference staff in 2015. In addition to bringing non-profit leadership experience to his post, Doug has had a lifetime of service as a Catskill trail volunteer under the guidance of his father, longtime Catskills Trails Chair Pete Senterman. In his role as volunteer, Doug most recently served as the Catskills Lean-to Chair; he was also the recipient of the William Hoferlin Award for exemplary service in 2013. Doug has a Bachelor of Business degree with a major in Business Administration and minor in Project Management. He brings a variety of skills and training related to outdoor education and recreation, including extensive knowledge of the Catskills, which allows him to work with the diverse groups, agencies, and individuals in the region. He is looking forward to expanding the Trail Conference's presence in the Catskills and growing the Community Trails Program there.

Jeff Senterman Named Associate Director of the Catskill Center



On July 1, Jeff Senterman will be leaving his role as the Trail Conference's Senior Program Coordinator and Catskills Program Coordinator to become the Associate Director of the Catskill Center. The mission of the Catskill Center is to protect and foster the environmental, cultural, and economic wellbeing of the Catskill region. In his new position with the Center, Jeff will continue to collaborate with the Trail Conference's efforts in the region.

Jeff's contributions to the Trail Conference and the Catskills have been tremendous. Under his watch, the role and scale of the Trail Conference's responsibilities in the region expanded greatly; his passion and dedication for the region will be greatly missed. We wish Jeff the best of luck in his new role with the Center and continue to expect great things from him.

Farewell to Membership and Development Manager Jennis Watson



Jennis Watson joined the Trail Conference as Membership and Development Associate in early 2012 and quickly became an invaluable behind-the-scenes resource, organizing the Trail Conference database, coordinating fundraising mailings, and establishing helpful office protocols. During her tenure, she was promoted to Membership & Development Manager. Jennis has played a key role in streamlining the back end of the Development department, improving productivity to allow for an efficient fundraising effort through the Darlington Schoolhouse campaign. She also volunteered for the Trail Conference, working on the discovery phase of the website upgrade project and serving as Assistant to the Trail Crew Chief for the Long Distance Trail Crew. We thank Jennis for all of her contributions and wish her and her growing family all the best in their new home in Georgia.

The Harriman Corridor as a Tourist Destination: Closing the Gap on the Far-Fetched

By Suzy Allman, founder of MyHarriman.com

Imagine a late-spring Saturday in Brooklyn: A couple can't wait to escape the city, and seeing the sheer size of Harriman State Park on the map—it's as big as two and a half Manhattans—they've strapped on packs, laced up boots, and are on their way to a weekend adventure.

The train from Penn Station is full of other similarly equipped hikers, and soon they're deep in conversation with likeminded strangers. A rustic wooden sign that says, "Welcome to Tuxedo," greets visitors as it suggests something of the adventure that awaits. A farmer's market is just steps away from the platform, so the couple picks up local cheese and apples. Inside the station, it's noisy. Volunteers staffing an information table are helping hikers identify their routes and trailheads. A smaller group of overnight backpackers picks up another map and a fuel canister. A juicer whirs in the kitchen while a solitary visitor looking out a window thinks, "I could live here."

He's charmed by the community outside the station: a small outfitter, full cafe tables, a boutique hotel under one of Tuxedo town's famously peaked roofs. The new bike path, from Suffern to the northern neighborhoods of Tuxedo, runs by the railroad. At the new bus stop, park-goers are already lined up to catch the Harriman shuttle. A zero-emission electric bus picks up day-trippers and



People visiting Harriman and Bear Mountain State Parks are looking for pre- and post-hike activities that the west side towns could provide.

overnighters; in one hour it will complete a loop through the park, dropping off hikers at more remote trailheads and picking up Appalachian Trail and Long Path thru-hikers to bring back to town.

For the New York couple, it will be a full day's adventure, capped off by some craft beer and dinner back in town after their hike.

If you know Tuxedo, you know that half of what makes this picture so appealing doesn't exist yet. But the biggest draw does: Harriman State Park, the second largest state park in New York, shoulders up to the

unique architecture in the fairytale-like town of Tuxedo. The train that brings a traveler from NYC straight to the head of the Ramapo-Dunderberg trail is a service that should be the envy of every would-be trail town in not just the state, but the country. It services an urban population that, come the weekend, is dying to escape to Other Places that in our idle moments call to us.

I imagine this a lot. I know I'm not the only person who's allowed my mind to wander over and through a little corridor of towns to the west of the park, ever since

plans for a massive casino project were thwarted in Orange County. If the parks make up more than three-quarters of the area of Tuxedo, how do you capitalize on this asset, inspiration, and potential? And how do you do it in a way that provides happiness, health, and wellbeing, that brings economic benefit to local businesses, encourages new businesses to bloom, and ultimately lures families to live and stay?

Post-casino decision, it's been a busy six months. I joined a group of citizens and participants from the area representing just a small slice of local interest to come together and try to imagine what these corridor towns could be. We brainstorm, argue, and get down to business; we've planned events, services, and—coming soon—a series of town hall-style meetings to promote commitment and involvement.

Call it DIY urbanism, action-planning, tactical placemaking; it is the recognition that people want to be where people come together. They want to visit authentic places. They want to share stories of outdoor adventure and make new friends. Like those electronic pins you drop on your iPhone map, they want to stick a real-life pin into a trail map on a restaurant wall, close to where someone else stuck a pin that also says, "I was here." And what's so far-fetched about that?



Tuxedo, Sloatsburg, and Suffern should embrace their potential as trail towns.

MyHarriman and the Tuxedo Chamber of Commerce have launched Base Camp Tuxedo, a series of programs including free Speakers and Suds events at the newly renovated Tuxedo train station. The first event, in May, featured a trail talk by the Trail Conference's Sona Mason, as well as local craft beer tasting. It was packed. The next Speakers and Suds event about the Powerlinez, the new climbing area in Harriman, is June 20. Visit facebook.com/MyHarriman for info.

BEAR TRACKS ESTATE Located in Suffern, NY



BEAR TRACKS ESTATE a 5 bedroom, 5.5 bath, approx. 8,500 square-foot Majestic Stone Manor, built c.1910 for wealthy woolens merchant H.P. McKenney, was completely renovated in 2010 with a focus on energy efficiency and preservation of the home's original character. Tucked into the base of Ramapo Mountains, this mountainside retreat for hikers and nature lovers is situated on an extremely secluded setting off the road on a 4.9 acre parcel which adjoins thousands of acres of parkland; Harriman State Park buttresses the rear yard and the Mahwah River runs through the eastern edge of the property and provides easy access to the hiking trail network. The main living quarters, an inviting great room with 30-foot ceilings and an open chef's kitchen, boasts original barn beams, handsome fieldstone walls, and exquisite craftsman style light fixtures. French doors from the great room access the rear of the estate offering spectacular views of the unique stone silo, lush gardens framed by a stone archway, grotto style pool, and covered stone patio with inviting fire pit. With 2 master bedroom suites, 3 additional bedrooms, 5.5 baths, breakfast room, billiards room, 2 offices, sauna and 4 fireplaces, this exquisite home has it all for the most discerning buyer. BEAR TRACKS ESTATE is located just one mile from an equestrian center which offers access to hundreds of miles of hiking trails, and the home's detached 4-bay garage has a horse stall and a hay loft. Located just 30 miles northwest of Manhattan, this sprawling estate is the ultimate artistic, musical, equestrian or hiking retreat.

BEAR TRACKS ESTATE

- Property backs up on Harriman State Park with easy access to hiking trail network.
- Turn of the century stone barn.
- The perfect retreat or headquarters for an outdoor-minded individual or hiking /nature organization. BEAR TRACKS ESTATE owner wants the home to go to this type of buyer.
- If home is purchased in response to this ad, owner will make a substantial donation to the Trail Conference.
- Yours for \$2,450,000.

ADVERTISEMENT

Make Trails Part of Your Legacy

By Jan Hesbon, Membership & Development Committee Volunteer

I'm an avid supporter of the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference and its legacy of providing hiking trails on wild lands throughout the region. That's why I'd like part of my legacy to be the continued backing of this organization. My intention is now reflected in my will: A percentage of the residual of my estate will go to the Trail Conference.

The value of my estate is modest by today's standards, but I know that a percentage earmarked for the Trail Conference will go a long way in helping to build and maintain the organization's 2,000-plus miles of trails in New York and New Jersey. And it's good to know that my estate gift to the Trail Conference does not diminish my commitment to family and friends.

You can just as easily make a gift from your estate. My method of donation is just one example; you can choose from a variety of options:



- A percentage of your residual estate: As the value of your estate grows, so too will the value of your gift.

- A specific sum from your estate, naming the Trail Conference in your will or living trust

- A charitable trust naming the Trail Conference as a beneficiary of a percentage of the remainder.

- Name the Trail Conference as beneficiary from an existing life insurance policy that is no longer needed. If you wish a tax deduction, name the Trail Conference as the (irrevocable) owner.

- Add the Trail Conference to your retirement plan by designating a percentage of your IRA. Be sure to make your beneficiary designation on the form provided by your plan administrator. With this asset, stating it in your will or living trust alone will not make a completed gift.

For me, the advantage of naming a percentage is simple: As the value of my estate grows, the value of my gift to the Trail Conference and to my family also grows. It gives me personal satisfaction to know I'll be supporting public access to nature well into the future. Please give this method of giving your consideration as well.

Jan Hesbon serves as a volunteer on the Membership & Development Committee as our planned giving specialist.



TC WINS TWO AWARDS

continued from page 1

tection and the N.J. Historic Sites Council, at a ceremony at Monmouth Battlefield State Park Visitor Center on May 14.

"These awards are our chance to honor the many who work so hard to preserve New Jersey's historic places," said Dan Saunders, Administrator and Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, of the state honorees. "Dedicated professionals, developers, local officials, non-profits and private individuals are working in remarkable ways to preserve the design and architectural beauty of our older structures.



The meticulous restoration of the Darlington Schoolhouse as the new headquarters of the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference earned the organization two prestigious awards.

Their efforts enhance everyone's environment, and we celebrate their success."

Funding for the restoration of Darlington Schoolhouse has been provided in part by the Garden State Historic Preservation Trust administered by the New Jersey Historic Trust/State of New Jersey, and the Bergen County Historic Preservation Trust Fund, a part of the Bergen County Open Space, Recreation, Floodplain Protection, Farmland & Historic Preservation Trust Fund Program. Additional support came



from public and private grants, Trail Conference members, and the community.

The Trail Conference, celebrating its 95th anniversary in October, now turns its attention to generating funds for a second century of service while operating out of its first permanent home. Supporters of the organization and its historic headquarters may call 201-512-9348 to learn more about contributing to a newly established endowment fund.

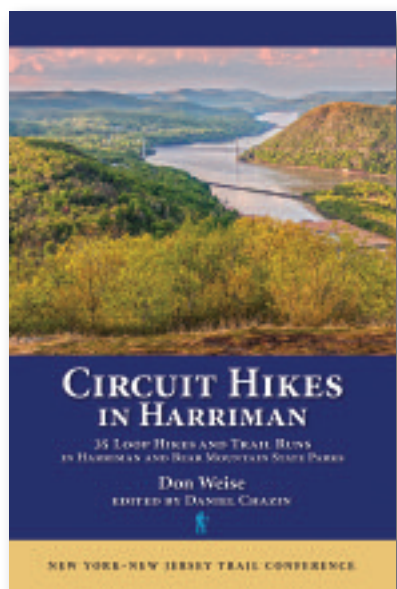
New Circuit Hikes in Harriman Book Available for Purchase!

The New York-New Jersey Trail Conference is excited to announce the publication of *Circuit Hikes in Harriman: 35 Loop Hikes and Trail Runs in Harriman and Bear Mountain State Parks*. The new book is the first ever, comprehensive guide to circuit hikes in these two highly popular parks. Eight of the loops are suitable for trail runs, and there is one approved mountain biking loop. Each chapter contains a detailed map,

elevation profile, and photos. Many chapters offer longer and shorter options. The hikes run a wide range of lengths and difficulties, from easy jaunts under four miles in length to strenuous loops of over nine miles.

The photos show fantastic views and interesting features that one might encounter while on the hike. Each map has been designed to clearly show the hike route and identify the many different points of interest along the way. The hike routes were selected by author Don Weise after more than 20 years of leading hikes and runs through the parks. The book was edited by Daniel Chazin and field checked by a team of volunteers. Maps were designed by Allison Werberg with assistance from Trail Conference Cartographer Jeremy Apgar. The book was designed and laid out by Blair Saldana.

At a retail price of \$15.95, this guidebook is perfect for anyone interested in exploring the rich network of trails in Harriman and Bear Mountain State Parks, including those new to hiking as well as experienced hikers looking to expand their horizons. To purchase a copy, shop our online store or stop in at our new Trail Conference headquarters. Learn more about this book, visit nynjtc.org/panel/circuit-hikes-harriman.



In between *Trail Walker* issues, you can keep up with trail news by subscribing to *e-Walker*, our electronic newsletter.

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What You Need to Know About Lyme Disease

By Howard E. Friedman, DPM

The risk of Lyme disease is highest from May through July, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Almost all cases of Lyme occur in the Northeast, with the states of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, and Massachusetts reporting the highest numbers of incidents. Following are important facts about Lyme disease for hikers and trail runners, based on the latest updates from the CDC.

What It Is

Lyme is transmitted by a bacteria, *Borrelia burgdorferi*, via the bite of the blacklegged tick. It is typically the tick nymph, usually only 2 mm or less in size, that is responsible for most infections. The tick needs to be attached to the skin for 36-48 hours to introduce enough bacteria to cause the Lyme infection.

Prevention

The CDC recommends the following steps to prevent infection:

- Apply the insect repellent DEET 20-30% directly to exposed skin and clothing and reapply every several hours.
- Repellents containing permethrin 0.5% can also be used on clothing and can last through several washings.
- Bathe or shower within two hours of returning home. Perform a thorough body exam, including armpits, groin, navel, and scalp after returning from a tick-infested area.
- Tumble clothes in a dryer on high heat for at least one hour to kill any ticks.

If a tick is found, remove it with tweezers. Make sure to pinch the tick as close to the skin as possible and pull straight out. Clean the skin with alcohol, iodine, or soap and water.

When to Seek Treatment

The CDC recommends seeking medical attention when you have been bitten by a tick or been in an area infested with ticks and develop symptoms that include an expanding red rash (which develops in about 70-80% of infected persons), fever, chills, headache, muscle and joint aches, or fatigue.

A diagnosis of Lyme disease is established based on signs and symptoms of the infection and a history of possible exposure to the blacklegged tick. Laboratory tests are only recommended for those people who have symptoms of Lyme.

Treatment involves antibiotics. Approximately 10-20% of patients infected with Lyme disease who are given two to four weeks of antibiotics may continue to have symptoms even after treatment. This is more common in people who were diagnosed late and is called Post-Treatment Lyme Disease Syndrome.



Number of Lyme Disease Cases

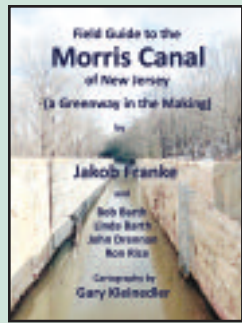
Pennsylvania: 4,981
Massachusetts: 3,816
New York: 3,512
New Jersey: 2,785
Connecticut: 2,111
About 35,000 cases were reported overall.

Source: CDC, 2013

Book Review

Field Guide to the Morris Canal of New Jersey (a Greenway in the Making)

By Jakob Franke, Bob Barth, Linda Barth, John Drennan, and Ron Rice



MCGC, 2014

Reviewed by Robert C. Ross

Author Jakob Franke and a number of other outdoors enthusiasts have produced a perfect example of a walking and hiking guide, one filled with useful information that has been lovingly checked and rechecked on the ground to ensure accuracy. Franke is one of the great hiking authorities in northern New Jersey and southern New York, with too many accolades to list here. He is a longtime Trail Conference volunteer and current Long Path co-chair, not to mention one of the most perfect gentlemen I have ever met. All of his many qualities are on display in this wonderful book.

A statewide greenway for cyclists and pedestrians is planned.

The Morris Canal was a 102-mile canal across northern New Jersey in use from 1831 to 1924. It stretched from Phillipsburg on the Delaware River eastward to Jersey City on the Hudson River, and was used primarily to carry anthracite coal from Pennsylvania to New Jersey and New York City. Unlike many other canals that used locks, it also used water-driven inclined planes to cross the northern New Jersey hills.

Although it was largely dismantled by 1930, portions of the canal and its accompanying feeders and ponds are preserved. A statewide greenway for cyclists and pedestrians is planned, beginning in Phillipsburg, traversing Warren, Sussex, Morris, Passaic, Essex, and Hudson counties, and including the old route through Jersey City.

This Field Guide gives kudos to the Canal Society of New Jersey (canalsocietynj.org), whose website contains an enormous amount of information about the Morris Canal. Franke describes in detail the current status of the Greenway (morriscanalgreenway.org), and illustrator Gary Kleindler provides an excellent short history of the canal.

The book consists of 23 sections, each devoted to about five miles of the canal. There are excellent maps of each section—public access points are identified; major physical features are described and photographed, often in color; walking tours are suggested; and many other details enhance the descriptions. Two separate bibliographies, including not only books and other publications, but also websites of significance, are also included.

This is a wonderful book, and I look forward to visiting many of the sections of the iconic Morris Canal that I have not yet seen.



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Trail Maintainers Are Getting a Crash Course in Invasive Species



Trail maintainers are the Trail Conference's front line in keeping hiking paths open and safe. They remove blowdowns, clear overgrowth, reblaze trails, and report hazardous conditions and suspicious activity. Some of these defenders of the trails may soon add another skill to their repertoire: invasive species warriors.

On May 6, the Westchester Trail Tramps, led by Mary Dodds, became the first crew to receive invasives training from Linda Rohleder, the Trail Conference's Director of Land Stewardship and Coordinator of the Lower Hudson Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management. Keen on her crew gaining the skills to properly identify and remove invasive species along the trails they maintain throughout the Hudson Hills and Highlands region of Westchester and Putnam counties, Dodds enlisted Rohleder for an intro course at the beginning of trail work season. Held at Teatown Lake Reservation, a handful of crew members and high school interns working under their guidance learned about Japanese bar-



berry, garlic mustard, and other species on the New York State Regulated and Prohibited Invasive Species list. After a presentation with plenty of photos and tips, Rohleder took the crew into the field to identify species firsthand. Armed with their new knowledge, Dodds and her team plan to complete an invasives survey of Montrose Point State Forest, which will help in determining the feasibility and prioritization of removal on trails there.

The maintainers' invasives course that was piloted with the Westchester Trail Tramps is a condensed version of the workshop Rohleder uses to train Invasives Strike Force surveyors, but also includes information about removal strategies. This new course customized for trail maintainers is currently under development; groups of maintainers and trail crews interested in scheduling a workshop at their park should contact Linda Rohleder (lrohleder@nynjtc.org) to work out details. At this time, the workshop is offered only to Trail Conference maintainers.



Hikers Urged to Help 'Stop the Spread' of Invasive Species

Thanks to programs like the Trail Conference-led Lower Hudson Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (LH PRISM), which aims to educate people about the identification and removal of non-native plants and animals, hikers are becoming more and more aware of the invasive species threatening our trails. But people are unknowingly contributing to the problem when seeds from invasive species stick to their clothes or get picked up in the mud on their boots and are transported to a new area during or after a hike. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is hoping



For more information on the DEC's Stop the Spread campaign, as well as info on state regulations and the NYS Regulated and Prohibited Invasive Species list, visit www.nyis.info.

to change that with their "Stop the Spread" campaign, which asks recreationalists to be proactive in preventing further invasives invasions when outdoors.

To Stop the Spread when gearing up for a hike, the DEC suggests:

- Wearing outer clothing that is not "seed-friendly." Seeds easily cling to wool, fleece, and Velcro; cover these fabrics with jackets, pants, and gaiters made of smoother materials, like nylon.
- Footwear with deep tread collects plants, mud and other debris. If you wear deep-treaded boots, make sure to clean them thoroughly after hiking.
- Carry a brush, small scissors, and other tools for cleaning clothing and gear after your hike before leaving the area.
- Before and after outdoor activities, make sure to:
 - Look for and remove seeds, plants pieces, and insects from your clothing, gear, and hair. Check any furry hiking buddies such as dogs or horses as well.
 - Remove dirt and mud, which can harbor unseen pests.
 - Designated cleaning stations and parking lots or driveways, where invasive species are unlikely to spread, are the best places to clean off. Avoid cleaning near waterways, which can carry invasives to potential new areas.

PEOPLE FOR TRAILS



PHIL CANTOR PHOTOGRAPHY

Krysti Sabins Ramsey, N.J.

Krysti Sabins is an environmental and conservation photographer/videographer who uses her visual skills to help spread the Trail Conference's message to the masses. (You've probably seen her handiwork on our website and YouTube channel—she produced our popular Breakneck Ridge video.) Through Unboring Exploring, her quirky, fun hiking/nature series and website, Sabins hopes to turn more people on to the area's majestic and sometimes overlooked parks and trails right in their backyard.

When did you get into hiking?

I started strappin' on my boots right after college, about six years ago. (Yikes, time flies!) What began as quick jaunts through Ramapo Reservation turned into multi-day trips to various state and national parks both in the Northeast and out West.

What are your favorite areas to hike in New York and New Jersey? My top five places would be the Gunks, the Catskills, the Hudson Highlands, various spots along the A.T. in N.J., and of course the classic, Harriman State Park.

Why did you start Unboring Exploring? After purchasing a video DSLR a few years back, I began taking footage of my hikes and exploits. Being the ham that I am, as well as a naturalist, I started acting as host in my videos so others could join in on my hikes while learning about their environment. This pastime quickly became a passion, connecting my love of the outdoors with my ability to engage and inspire others.

Why are you interested in getting people excited about the outdoors? Nowadays, there is an ever-growing disconnect between society and nature. I aim to close that gap and demonstrate that nature is for everyone, not just the base-jumping, hardcore, Bear Grylls-type. My goal is to instill a love of the outdoors, encouraging individuals to protect and preserve our natural areas so they can remain pristine for years to come.

Check out Sabins' work at unboringexploring.com and youtube.com/unboringexploring. Like her on Facebook at facebook.com/unboringexploring.

Remember: Some areas of our parks are teeming with invasive species. Cleaning your gear is especially important after hiking through heavily invaded areas when plants such as garlic mustard or Japanese stiltgrass are in seed and before entering a new park which may not be invaded by these species.



Featured Hike



By Sona Mason

The Highlands Trail in Chester, N.Y.: A Stroll Through Wilderness That Might Not Have Been



SONA MASON

You can view and download a map of the Highlands Trail through Goosepond South at nynjtc.org/highlands-trail-goosepond-south

Trail Access:

A gravel parking pullout is located just after the crossing of Trout Brook on Bull Mill Road, about 1/4 mile from the intersection of Laroe Road in Chester, N.Y.

Description:

In Chester, N.Y., not far from the hamlet of Sugarloaf, the Highlands Trail (HT) has been given the chance to “get back to nature,” courtesy of a major conservation victory. On Christmas Eve 2014, a 400-acre parcel that had been slated to become a 222-unit residential development was purchased by the Open Space Institute (OSI) to remain forever green. This acquisition, made possible by the Trail Conference and its partners, is an important step in creating an uninterrupted greenway connection between Goose Pond Mountain State Park and Sterling Forest State Park. For the HT, that means a major portion of the trail is now rerouted off a busy roadway and onto beautiful woodlands.

The Highlands Trail, blazed with teal dia-

monds, leaves its road walk from Sterling Forest along Lakes and Laroe roads, turns onto Bull Mill Road, and right into the forest, just past the bridge crossing over Trout Brook. A new kiosk and bench, compliments of OSI, welcome you to this part of the trail with a short history of the parcel's acquisition and map of the trail and property. Since this property joins up with Goose Pond Mountain State Park's southern end,



it's been named Goose Pond South by OSI, who hope to hand it over to the New York State Parks system in a few years.

The easy first few hundred yards skirt the edge of an open wildflower field, along the edge of a line of stately sycamores and grand old sugar maples. The path turns at the bend of Trout Brook, which presents superb pebble-skimming opportunities. Steadily climbing uphill, the trail passes through a variety of ecosystems, including quiet red cedar groves, to a view sweeping west toward Sugarloaf Mountain. From there the trail heads downhill, crossing over Bull Mill Road, onto the northern part of the property. It travels across a rushing stream and hummocky wetland, ending uphill at a stone wall marking the boundary with Goose Pond Mountain State Park.

Future plans will connect the HT with trails in this neighboring park. Until then, we have a new view and pleasant stroll over wilderness that might have not been, as Howie Cohen, neighbor and avid volunteer on the trail, remarked. “We shiver at the thought of what could have been if not for the like-minded people who know the power of the land's natural beauty and

helped preserve this land,” Cohen said. “My wife Vicki and I are so appreciative of the Trail Conference and OSI for investing their resources in our backyard.”

While the trail is open, there's still work to be done on the reroute—and we could use your help! Volunteers are working on this project throughout the summer, including some Wednesday evenings; check nynjtc.org/crewtrips for dates. Anyone with an interest in contributing to the creation of a beautiful, sustainable new HT are welcome to help. No experience is necessary; we provide tools and training on-site before getting started. We'll also be holding a special Trail University workshop on August 1 on how to build a stream crossing. Please sign up for the free workshop so that we can bring enough tools: www.nynjtc.org/workshop/tread-and-drainage-how-build-stream-crossing-tu-980. For more information about the HT reroute in Chester and volunteer opportunities on the trail, contact West Hudson Program Coordinator Sona Mason: smason@nynjtc.org or 201-512-9348 ext. 16.



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