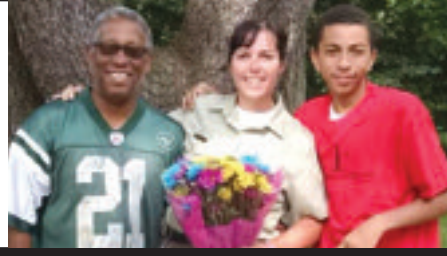


Ask a Trail Builder

Why build stairs on a trail through the woods? It's all about sustainability.

READ MORE ON PAGE 7 ▶



One Last Hike

Cancer couldn't stop Keith Lyons from sharing a final camping trip with his godson.

READ MORE ON PAGE 9 ▶



TRAIL WALKER

Spring 2015

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

www.nynjtc.org

New York-New Jersey Trail Conference Opens New Headquarters at Darlington Schoolhouse

By Jennifer Easterbrook and Alice Luddington-Cantor

A new chapter in the Trail Conference's 94-year history begins April 7, when a ribbon-cutting ceremony completes the move into the new headquarters at the Darlington Schoolhouse in Mahwah, New Jersey. The Trail Conference has worked with many partners since 2004 to acquire, stabilize, restore, and repurpose the 124-year-old historical landmark, which borders the Ramapo Valley County Reservation and now helps to serve the organization's goal of protecting and promoting access to the outdoors. "While this day has been a long time coming, I don't regret taking care, every step of the way, to build a headquarters that represents our values and enables us to better accomplish our mission of connecting people with nature," said Edward Goodell, Trail Conference executive director.

With meticulous attention to detail, the schoolhouse was restored in two phases: Phase 1, completed in 2012, included structural stabilization, exterior renovation, climate control, and utilities, while Phase 2 involved the interior renovation of the orig-

Find out how we made our new headquarters accessible to all on our blog: <http://blog-dsh.nynjtc.org>. Read about the Arts and Crafts inspiration behind the original Darlington Schoolhouse on page 7.



Visit the Trail Conference's new headquarters at the restored Darlington Schoolhouse at 600 Ramapo Valley Road in Mahwah, NJ.

inal 4,400-square-foot schoolhouse and construction of a 3,700-square-foot, two-story addition. In March, electricians, plumbers, and painters put the finishing touches on the headquarters building at 600 Ramapo Valley Road. In a concerted effort by staff and volunteers, equipment and files were officially moved in from the rented office just up the road, where the Trail Conference had maintained operations since 2001. Everyone is invited to stop by the new headquarters to purchase maps, books, and memberships, sign up for volunteer opportunities and workshops, or simply learn more about the organization. A day-long grand opening ceremony is

scheduled for Saturday, September 12 to acknowledge the supporters, builders, and friends who made this remarkable restoration a reality. As the organization enters its 95th year, the new headquarters will be the cornerstone from which the Trail Conference builds its second century of serving the region by making public lands more accessible. For events related to the headquarters grand opening in September and 95th anniversary in October, follow us on Facebook and Twitter and watch the Trail Conference website and E-Walker, our electronic newsletter. Click "Get Our E-newsletter" button on the website if you are not already a subscriber.

PEOPLE FOR TRAILS



Susan and Howard Reed Montague, NJ

If you've ever hiked up Stokes State Forest, odds are good you've hiked on a trail maintained by Susan and Howard Reed.

How they met: This dynamic trail-maintaining duo first met back in 1995, when Susan decided to go hiking. In search of a new path, she got her hands on a copy of *Trail Walker* that featured an organized hike on the Paulinskill Valley Trail in Stokes. While out on that fateful hike, she met her future husband, Howard.

Finding love... and a sense of duty: After getting married in 1997, Susan and Howard decided to give back to the trails that introduced them to each other; in 2003, they started maintaining trails in Stokes. At one point, they were looking after one third of all the trails in Stokes State Forest! They've since backed down a little bit, but still maintain Cartwright Trail, Coursen Trail, Stoll Trail, Tibbs Trail, and Stony Lake Trail.

Tools of the trade: You can often find this team hard at work on their trails—Howard with his repurposed pack full of tools, and Susan with her electrician's belt for blazing. (Susan's secret: The belt's magnetic pockets help keep the metal nails safe until needed.) Howard's "new" favorite tool is the Silky Saw, which was introduced to this pair by their trail chair, Howie Liebmann.

Keep an eye out: Howard and Susan say they haven't spotted as many bears as they once saw in Stokes State Forest. They're happy to point out the signs of the porcupine on the trail, however. Another likely sighting: the Reeds hard at work on their trails.



The Weekly Forced March

By Hank Osborn, East Hudson Program Coordinator

Almost every weekend, year-round, my wife and I enjoy a good hike with our adolescent children. We love our local trails, the exercise, and getting out into nature. The children do not share our views. They require encouragement to join us every time. They actually enjoy each hike, every weekend, but then they seem to forget by the following Saturday or Sunday that they had fun in the woods. There seems to be a powerful force affecting their memory and motivation.

We have to work to get the children out of the house. They resist us. "Do we have to go? Can I stay here? I went last weekend." To which we respond, "Yes, you went last weekend and you loved it; and no, you cannot stay home; and yes, you have to come on the hike today."

I think our children are representative of many kids in this modern age of miniatur-

Getting kids to disconnect from technology and reconnect with nature.

ized and highly powerful in-your-face-technology. The children would rather sit around on the couch and zone out on their iDevices then walk through the woods—or do anything at all.

It takes cajoling. We have to repeat ourselves and be firm and not give in to their desperate offers to negotiate. "I'll go on the hike if I don't have to do the dishes tonight. I'll walk the dog if you let me skip the hike. I can't hike now, I just took a shower, can we do it later?" To which we respond: "Nope. No, and no—get in the car now."

We drive to the local trailhead, unload ourselves, and announce, "leave your



Without iPhones, Lila and Callie take a break during a hike they thoroughly enjoyed on Fishkill Ridge.

screens in the car." There is often surprisingly little fuss at this request—except for the consistent rebuttal of, "but we need our phones to take pictures." To which we respond: "Sorry. Let's go."

The next hurdle is the hiking-through-the-woods part—and guess what? The children love it! They laugh and run and smile and joke and play and absolutely enjoy themselves. See the accompanying photos as proof.

Sometimes we hike a loop, other times

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TRAIL WALKER

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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.

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For a full list of staff visit
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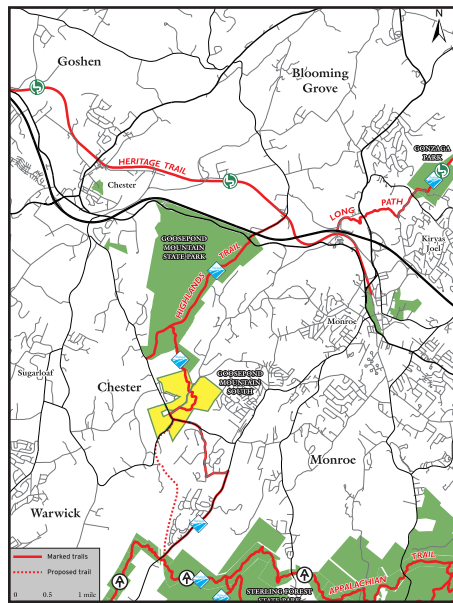
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Preserved Greenspace in Chester Creates a Safer Highlands Trail

By Sona Mason, West Hudson Program Coordinator

Another wonderful victory for land conservation is unfolding this year: A 400-acre parcel that abuts the southern portion of Goose Pond Mountain will forever remain undeveloped, thanks to the work of the Open Space Institute (OSI), the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference, New York State Parks, the town planning board of Chester, NY, and concerned citizens in Chester. This acquisition is an important step in creating an uninterrupted greenway connection between Goose Pond Mountain State Park and Sterling Forest State Park. It also allows a significant portion of



the Highlands Trail (HT) in Chester to be rerouted from an unsettling road walk onto a preserved area.

For years, the land at Laroe and Bull Mill roads was slated to be the 222-unit residential development Chester Golf, which would have marred the viewshed of this rural community and intensified traffic along an already precarious road walk for the Highlands Trail. Area residents, led by the Preservation Collective's Tracy Schuh and supported by the Trail Conference, objected and petitioned the town planning board to reconsider. After many months of negotiations, OSI bought the parcel on Christmas Eve 2014, and plans to transfer it to the NYS Parks over the next few years.

Called Goose Pond South in the interim, this land serves the overarching goal of the Trail Conference, OSI, and NYS Parks to create a continuous greenway and wildlife migration corridor connecting parks such as Sterling Forest, Schunemunk, Black Rock Forest, and Storm King. Members of the Trail Conference's Conservation Committee are in the process of negotiating land purchases or trail easements with owners of undeveloped property to achieve this objective.

In the meantime, Goose Pond South is open to the public, with a small parking lot off Bull Mill Road in the works. OSI installed a kiosk with map at the entrance to the Highlands Trail, which is now planned to join the Appalachian Trail at Bellvale Ridge in Sterling Forest. This will



SONA MASON

help close the gaps along the HT, which runs for over 150 miles from the Delaware Water Gap in New Jersey, across the Hudson River in New York, and on through to the Connecticut border.

The Trail Conference's Highlands Trails Chair Glen Oleksak scouted the parcel extensively and flagged a new, sustainable route for the HT, which he and volunteers blazed with the trail's characteristic aqua diamonds on the first public hike through the property on February 21. Jennifer Garofalini of OSI co-led the hike, sharing the history of the property acquisition as well as the organization's vision for the region.

We're welcoming all who are interested in being further involved with the Highlands Trail reroute to help us build it and place it on the ground this summer. For more information or to sign up to help create this new trail link, contact West Hudson Program Coordinator Sona Mason at smason@nynjtc.org or 201-512-9348 ext. 16.



Volunteer Sam Huber appreciates a waterfall along the Lenape Trail.

Tell NJ lawmakers Sundays should remain hunting-free.
 Visit www.nynjtc.org/issue/sunday-hunting-new-jersey for details.

A Legacy of Advocacy

By Peter Dolan, New Jersey Program Coordinator

I would venture to guess that very few people have advocacy spring to mind as one of the major functions of the Trail Conference, and yet nothing could be closer to the heart of what we do. A history of the Trail Conference published 20 years ago, "Vistas & Visions," opens with the following quote:

"This trip last Sunday made us realize how blessed we are, who live in this big metropolitan area, to have so near at hand for our constant enjoyment so many beautiful mountains and trails. And I am afraid that as we go over the trails, we forget that it is the hard work of a few that makes possible the enjoyment by many."

—Angelique Rivolier, Director of the Inkova Outdoor Club, describing a hike on a new section of the Appalachian Trail near Sterling Forest, April 1930

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Nominations for Board, Delegates-at-Large

The Trail Conference Nominating Committee invites nominations for membership on the Board of Directors and Delegates-at-Large. The qualifications for Board of Directors are current membership in the Trail Conference and service participation in trail activities or on a Trail Conference committee. The qualification for Delegate-at-Large is current membership in the Trail Conference. Self-nominations for Delegate-at-Large and Board of Directors are appropriate and welcome.

Please email your nomination to nominations@nynjtc.org. The deadline for receipt of nominations is Friday, April 24, 2015.

Giving Tuesday Challenge Raises Over \$30K

We have to say, THANK YOU! We've tallied your Giving Tuesday Challenge donations and we're blown away. Thanks to our wonderful donors, we raised \$30,799 over the eight-day period from November 25 through December 2. These tremendous contributions will be met with \$36,000 in matching gifts for a grand total of \$66,799, all of which will be put to work to support the trail building, trail maintaining, trail education, volunteer development, and trail protection programs we provide throughout our area.

Call for Volunteer Award Nominations

Do you know someone who has done an outstanding job as a Trail Conference volunteer?

The Volunteer Committee is looking for nominees for our annual awards. With more than 1,500 people who donate their time to the organization, we know award-worthy volunteers are in our ranks. Who do you know who has gone above and beyond? Members may nominate individuals for the annual awards, presented every fall by the Trail Conference Board. The deadline is July 1.

The nomination process is easy. Check www.nynjtc.org/awards to see the awards categories, qualifications, and if the potential candidate has received an award in the past. Then fill out the online nomination form, or e-mail it with supporting statements to the Volunteer Committee at awards@nynjtc.org. To get ideas of what information is needed, see www.nynjtc.org/document/award-nomination-samples.

From the Executive Director



Spring is the season of reawakening.

At the Trail Conference, the melting of snowy mountains and lengthening of days finds the staff and volunteers emerging from in-office reports and planning to resume their duties outdoors. I love how the beginning of each work season is always so promising, full of excitement over building new trails and the anticipation of completing years-in-the-making projects.

This year, our eagerness for spring hasn't been reserved for thawing trails. For over a decade we worked on purchasing and restoring the Darlington Schoolhouse in Mahwah, NJ, and in March we finally moved into the historic building as our new headquarters—our new home for fulfilling our mission of connecting people with nature.

The new office has many practical advantages over our prior leased space: plenty of room for staff and volunteer workspace, meetings, and training; hospitable accommodations for visitors and customers; and a low carbon footprint with reduced operating costs. Perhaps even more important, however, are the ways in which the building and its restoration are a physical manifestation of our organizational values:

- **Preservation & Stewardship:** The original schoolhouse—built of native timber and field stone—is preserved, and the addi-

tion is tastefully designed with similar materials.

- **Environmental Protection:** The building is super insulated, while climate control is provided by a geothermal system at one-third the energy use of high-efficiency alternatives. Additionally, the entire landscape is conceived as a restoration of the riverine habitat for native and endangered species, such as the wood turtle.

- **Engaging the Public:** The property is located between county and town parks and across the road from a state college. The land itself is public parkland, and approximately half of the funds needed to create the headquarters came from open space and historic preservation grants.

The restoration of Darlington School-

This organization has never been stronger, nor able to accomplish so much.

house is a very visible commitment to the communities we serve, giving us an opportunity to raise even more awareness of the Trail Conference mission. When you think about it, most of our tangible work is somewhat hidden away in the woods. And the better job we do, the harder it is to see that any work has been done. Our new headquarters is a showcase of everything we strive to achieve, inviting potential new members, volunteers, and partners to learn more.

And there's so much to talk about. A new office precedes our 100th anniversary, quickly approaching in the fall of 2020. With the impending arrival of that milestone, we are tuning up the organizational structure to meet the challenges of a new century. Since 2000, the Trail Conference

has been asked to do ever more as parks have struggled to allocate resources despite an increasing load of parklands and visitors. In the field, aging trails are showing wear and tear from years of use, as well as the impact of climate change and invasive species. In response to those needs, we became part of the AmeriCorps network, supplying approximately 20 trained AmeriCorps members annually for trail and invasive crews. In addition, we have been asked to lead regional partnerships such as the Lower Hudson Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management and the Catskill Conservation Corps.

With all of these new programs, it is no surprise that our organizational structure designed decades ago is now strained handling these new responsibilities. Led by the Board of Directors with input from a broad range of stakeholders, we will be fully implementing the new organizational structure and process before the end of 2015. We will also be developing a strategic plan for the next five years with an eye toward our centennial.

New beginnings are exciting, filled with the optimism of intentional change, as well as the anxiety of what lies ahead. But this organization has never been stronger, nor able to accomplish so much. I'm looking forward to everything we can achieve in our new headquarters in our second century of service.

It's a new season for the Trail Conference.

— Edward Goodell
Executive Director
goodell@nynjtc.org

PEOPLE FOR TRAILS



Georgette Weir Poughkeepsie, NY

Since 2001, picking up a copy of *Trail Walker* meant reading the warm prose and expert editing of Georgette Weir. But after nearly 40 years in the editorial field, Weir decided to retire from her post as Trail Conference communications manager in January.

"Putting my communications skills and background to work on behalf of trails, on behalf of the outdoors, on behalf of the environment... I feel very lucky to have had that opportunity," she says. "I've really enjoyed being inspired by people who are doing good work and telling their stories. That's been a nice job to have."

Though she's taken a self-described sabbatical to figure out what's next, this certainly isn't the last the Trail Conference will see of Weir. She says you may find her and her husband, Jean-Claude Fouéré, clipping overgrowth with a trail crew this season (they resigned as maintainers of the Blueberry Run Trail in the Minnewaska State Park Preserve last fall). Or if you take a hike with the Mid-Hudson chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club, there's a chance the pair will be your leaders for the day.

"I do not see myself walking away from some kind of outdoor-environmental focus," Weir admits. "I'm really exploring new possibilities. But I have been very much enjoying not sitting at a desk all day."

IN MEMORIAM

Bob Newton

Robert L. Newton, a life member of the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference, died peacefully on Christmas Day, 2014. He was 87 years old.

Bob, who resided in Pompton Plains, NJ, was a tireless champion of the Trail Conference's mission. In the 1970s and '80s, he worked on the trail crew that began the construction of the Appalachian Trail in western New Jersey; he later became trail supervisor of the AT in that area. He served as Secretary and member of the Trail Conference Board of Directors from 2002-2005 and was a chairman of the organization's Conservation and Advocacy Committee. Bob also helped launch the Bear Mountain Trails Project and served as the hiking representative on the New Jersey

State Trails Council until 2007.

Bob's dedication to the outdoors was further seen in his work on the board of the Environmental Education Fund and while assisting the Walks and Outings Committee of the New York-North Jersey chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club. He served as an AMC supervisor for trail maintenance and was a member of the Frost Valley Trail Walkers and Union County Hiking Club. Bob was also a board member of Action Theatre.

A graduate of Syracuse University and Cornell University, he worked for five years for two chemical companies and for 30 years on Wall Street as a security analyst, portfolio manager, venture capitalist, and partner.

Bob is survived by his wife Alma and children.

TRAIL NEWS ROUNDUP

New parking areas, trail colors in Huckleberry Ridge State Forest

This past fall and winter, several changes have occurred in Huckleberry Ridge State Forest (HRSF) in the towns of Greenville and Deerpark in Orange County.

The Department of Environmental Conservation has installed four new parking areas with kiosks. The first one is on the Greenville Turnpike along the Shawangunk Ridge Trail (SRT), where the trail turns north off the road. A second

parking lot is near the northwest corner of Hawthorne Lake, at the end of Raymond Drive. The SRT will be rerouted through HRSF and along this parking area in the near future.

The other two parking areas are at both ends of the Minisink Trail, which runs from the Old Greenville Turnpike to Route 6, near the Greenville/Deerpark town line. The Minisink Trail (about five miles) used to be blazed red, but has been reblazed with yellow DEC markers.

The Lenape Ridge Trail, which also

starts at the Old Greenville Turnpike and used to be blazed white, has been reblazed with red DEC markers in the state forest, and standard red blazes on private land. This trail, which currently ends near the Port Jervis Metro North line, will be extended to the SRT this summer.

The reblazing of both trails has been 80 percent completed and will be finished as soon as the weather allows.

Arden-Surebridge Trail Relocated for Habitat Restoration

New York State Parks has recently overseen habitat restoration along the first half-mile of the Arden-Surebridge Trail in Harriman State Park, beginning at the Lake Skannatati parking area. The trail has been relocated in this area to alleviate erosion and ongoing impacts to sensitive habitats, in keeping with NYS Parks' mission to provide for public enjoyment of parklands while maintaining sound environmental stewardship. The new section of trail follows a more gradual route around the side of the mountain, offering limited views of Lake Askoti and nearby rocky ledges, before connecting to the existing trail at the northern end of the mountain. The new route also results in a change in the western terminus of the Red Cross Trail, which has been shortened by about 0.2 miles.

Please respect the natural resource stewardship efforts of NYS Parks and keep to the new route when hiking this section of trail. Continued unauthorized use of the former trail will only prolong the time required for habitat restoration. Questions

about these trail changes should be directed to Ed McGowan, Palisades Interstate Park Commission Science Director, at 845-786-2701 ext. 263.

The trail changes in this area that affect the Arden-Surebridge Trail and Red Cross Trail are on the Trail Conference's new Harriman-Bear Mountain Trails map set, available now.

New Jersey Preserves 1,500 Watershed Acres in Northern Morris County

In early 2015 the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Green Acres Program announced the purchase of 1,500 acres of pristine watershed buffer land from Jersey City, providing permanent protection to land that surrounds the city's Split Rock Reservoir.

The preserved tract is a greenway connector, linking the state's Wildcat Ridge Wildlife Management Area, Fanny State Park, and Buck Mountain. The land is primarily forested, with hiking trails and fishing access, and includes a wide range of plant and animal species—including threatened and endangered species.

Threatened Long Path Segment Saved by Fast-Acting Volunteers and Officials

Kudos to supportive and responsive county and town leadership! The Long Path in Rockland County recently came under threat of losing an important connecting segment between Rockland Lake State

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Huckleberry Ridge State Forest

2015 Parking & Blaze Updates

Lenape Ridge - Red
Minisink - Yellow
Shawangunk Ridge - Blue



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

A Thank You to My Hiking Mentors

By Pat Marcotullio

When I tell my fellow hikers that I was born in a mountainous area of central Italy, they often reply, "You must have done a lot of hiking there!" Truth be told, I did no hiking in my youth—a lot of walking and biking, yes, like trekking several miles to school, to visit my grandmother in the next village, or to the train station. During WWII bombing raids we would climb up the mountain to the bomb shelter—a cave—but I wouldn't exactly call that recreational hiking!

When I came to the United States at 19, we settled in the Bronx, which didn't offer many opportunities for hiking, even if I had the time to do it. It was about 20 years ago that I got my first opportunity to hike... if you want to call it that. I lived less than a quarter-mile from the Long Path in Rockland County, and I would walk it back and forth for a couple of hours—until one day I ran into a group from the ADK North Jersey-Ramapo chapter and discovered such a thing as organized hiking groups and clubs.

It didn't take long for me to join the chapter and start hiking regularly with them. I did not know anything about proper hiking attire until John Giuffrida and Nick Viggiano, two hiking veterans and my most persistent mentors, made me aware of the difference between the work



"Be at the trailhead on time—or else," says Pat Marcotullio, who maintains trails in Harriman and Wawayanda state parks.

boots I was wearing and the hiking boots I should wear. From Lilo Kassel I learned that there is no such thing as an easy hike, while John, Nick, Rita Boyd, Phyllis Key, Peter Tilgner, Mark Liss, and many others introduced me to the finer points of reading a map, the wisdom of avoiding steep climbs after lunch, the code of safe hiking (I'm still working on using a hiking stick carefully), and to be at the trailhead on time—or else. It is because of these friends and their mentoring that I wanted to give back, too.

I remember the day John told me in no uncertain terms: "You have to join the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference. Who do you think is maintaining the trails, designing new trails, and fighting for open

spaces?" Didn't take me long to become a member. When I mentioned to Pete Heckler that I was thinking of becoming a maintainer, it took him a whole week to find a trail for me. After that, Estelle Anderson volunteered me for another trail. I have two wonderful and supportive supervisors who are there when I need them and make my job maintaining a section of the Ramapo-Dunderberg Trail in Harriman and the Iron Mountain Trail in Wawayanda easier.

I now consider myself a good hiker and hike leader, even if I don't lead much anymore. I could not have become one without the many mentors I encountered. Thanks to all; I hope I have passed along some of the wisdom you taught me.

THE WEEKLY FORCED MARCH

continued from page 1

we go out-and-back, and sometimes we drop a car and hike from point to point. At the end of the hike, when we all pile back into the car, the children are often subdued and a little tired. They gobble up their iDevices and stare at the screens. We sometimes hear, "Mom, Dad, that was awesome." We don't hear it every time—but sometimes.



Enjoying the woods—no iDevices necessary.

My wife and I are not changing the world, but it feels as if we are fighting against it. The power these little machines have over our children is very, very strong. It wants to keep them inside on the couch and out of the woods. We feel we are doing the right thing by fighting against that corruptive power, getting our children to disconnect from technology and reconnect with nature through our weekly forced march.

Want to get your kids unplugged and into the woods? Find a family-friendly hike in your area using our hikes database: www.nynjtc.org/view/hike.

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PEOPLE FOR TRAILS



David Kopp
Mahwah, NJ

Member of the Trail Conference Membership and Development Committee

Member of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings and the William Morris Society

David Kopp, Litt. D, is a Trail Conference member who has taken particular interest in the organization's new headquarters at the historic Darlington Schoolhouse in Mahwah, NJ. Besides living in a community adjacent to the building, Kopp is a medievalist who has written a wonderfully detailed article on the influence of 19th century English textile designer and eco-socialist activist William Morris upon Darlington Schoolhouse architect Dudley Newton.

Newton employed the ethos of the American Arts and Crafts Movement in his construction of the Schoolhouse, a movement championed by Morris as a solution to the environmental abuse of the Industrial Revolution, Kopp explains. The architect used local rough cut stone and wood shingle, giving the Schoolhouse "remarkable fidelity to place," Kopp writes.

The Trail Conference has been very careful in honoring such a monument to Mahwah history, working in conjunction with the New Jersey Historic Trust and Bergen County Historic Preservation Advisory Board to ensure the integrity of the original building in the restoration. The new addition, though harmonious with the original structure, does not attempt to be an exact copy, rightly allowing the historic building its individual distinction.

It is a renovation that remains true to the mission of Morris, who was an instrumental organizer in creating the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, which focuses on preventing the haphazard and historically insensitive "restoration" of buildings from the past. "Morris would enthusiastically applaud this effort," Kopp says.

To read Kopp's full article, *Finding William Morris in the Darlington Schoolhouse Project: Arts and Crafts Architecture, Historical Preservation and Ecosophy*, visit <http://blog-dsh.nynjtc.org>.

Sign Up Now: Two Hike-Run Events Supporting the Trail Conference

Swap your hiking boots for trail running shoes this May, when two walk-run events supporting the Trail Conference will be held.

The Second Annual Rock the River 6K Trail Run-Walk (formerly known as Escape to the Palisades), raising awareness of the Palisades and the Palisade Interstate Park, will take place Sunday, May 3 at Ross Dock in Fort Lee, NJ. This exciting course climbs

and descends the Palisades, offering tremendous river and skyline views from the Long Path and Shore Trail. Registration is open through race day, with proceeds going towards the Trail Conference's work in the Palisades. For more information, visit www.rocktheriverrace.com.

And in celebration of our move into the new Trail Conference headquarters, join us for the MRCC Trail Conference 5K Run and Walk Sunday, May 17 at the Darling-

ton Schoolhouse in Mahwah. Organized by the Mahwah Regional Chamber of Commerce and benefitting the Trail Conference, the race and 1.5-mile walk starts at the restored Darlington Schoolhouse and weaves through the scenic Ramapo Reservation. The event includes food and tours of the schoolhouse. To register and find more details, visit www.mahwah.com or www.nynjtc.org.



People for Trails. Trails for People.

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

Bear Mountain Trails Project: The Final Push

By Ama Koenigshof, Trail Builder/Educator

After years of planning with our partners from the Palisades Interstate Park Commission, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Appalachian Trail Conservancy, National Park Service, and Bear Mountain State Park, the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference broke ground on the Bear Mountain Trails Project (BMTP) in 2006. Since then, the questions on everyone's mind have remained the same: Are we done yet?! Are we ever going to be done?! Well, thanks to ever-changing conditions and maintenance needs, a trail builder's work is never complete. But today we can give you a better answer: We're ALMOST there! With your help, we can finish the main feature of the BMTP—the relocation of the Appalachian Trail—by the end of 2017.

What is the Bear Mountain Trails Project?

The Bear Mountain Trails Project includes the restoration of all the trails on the mountain. The focus of the project is the Appalachian Trail (AT), but it also includes the Major Welch Trail, the Suffer-Bear Mountain Trail, several link trails, the All-Persons Trail—an accessible portion of the AT at the top of Bear Mountain—and the Trails for People Exhibit located on the AT near the Bear Mountain Inn.

What has been done on Bear Mountain so far?

Since 2006, 1,745 volunteers working alongside professional trail builders and Conservation Corps members have spent over 58,000 hours building 17,131 linear feet of trail, including 1,805 stairs and 11,631 square feet of crib wall. In 2010, the first section of the AT relocation, consisting of roughly 700 steps from the Inn to the Scenic View Road cul-de-sac, was finished. In 2011, a second section including an AT loop and nearly a half mile of accessible trail at the top of Bear Mountain was opened. In 2012, a section of the AT known as the Demonstration Trail (part of the Trails for People Exhibit) was completed. And in 2013, a major portion of the Major Welch trail was rerouted.

What are we doing this year on Bear Mountain? And what's left after that?

In 2015, we will complete the Trails for People Exhibit and 482 more feet of the Appalachian Trail between the Scenic View Road cul-de-sac. That leaves only 1,141 feet remaining until we reach the Perkins Memorial Tower at the top!

Why is this project important?

In 1923, New York-New Jersey Trail Conference volunteers completed construction of the Appalachian Trail on Bear Mountain. It was the first section of the AT to be opened. Due to its close proximity to New York City, Bear Mountain State Park receives nearly 3 million visitors per year—a whole lot of feet on the trails creating a whole lot of impact. From Georgia to Maine, Bear Mountain is the heaviest used section of the Appalachian Trail. This project is vital to reducing the environmental impact of visitors and keeping these trails sustainable for future generations to enjoy.



The Bear Mountain Trails Project built the accessible All-Persons Trail on the AT.

How can you help us complete the AT on Bear Mountain?

Come out, volunteer, and learn new skills! The trail-building season runs from late March through late November. We're on-site Friday through Monday.

Help us finish the trail! To finish the Appalachian Trail by 2017, we need \$250,000. Your contribution to the Bear Mountain Trails project will help us improve the AT experience at one of its most historic and heavily used sections. We're so close, with only 1,000 feet remaining to reach Perkins Tower. Our work at Bear Mountain is creating an ecologically sustainable, more appealing, and safer trail for Bear Mountain visitors to enjoy for decades to come.

Your gift will also help create the new Trails for People Interpretive Area. Trails for People is being built adjacent to the most frequently visited section of the park to attract, educate, and expose the general public to the Trail Conference, the art and science of trail building, the spirit of volunteerism, and the backcountry experience.

Learn more at www.nynjtc.org/bearmt-trails or contact Ama at 616-3337-2481 or ama@nynjtc.org.



The Demonstration Trail on the AT is part of the Trails for People Exhibit, which will be completed this year.

Long Distance Trails Crew Installs Large Stepping Stones on Long Path in Harriman State Park

By Bob Fuller, member of the Long Distance Trails Crew

This December work trip was our last for 2014. We went out on a very rainy Saturday to set up the high line and then on a beautiful, but cold Sunday rearranged giant stepping stones at the Long Path crossing of the Lake Skannatati inlet stream. Many of you will remember this as a very difficult crossing, especially in high water and in the winter when the rocks ice up. Some of us remember falling into the cold winter water here. We wanted to make that a thing of the past.

Sunday morning the water was running deep and fast, and right in the middle of the stream was a giant rock (1,500 lbs. or more) we wanted to reposition as a stepping stone. This made getting a sling under the rock a very COLD and WET challenge. Not only was there no place to stand, you couldn't see the bottom of the rock or the bottom of the

stream bed. And everything—slings, feet, and even heavy rock bars—were pushed downstream by the current. Finally we got a sling on the rock and the rock in the air, only to find that we had to reposition the sling multiple times and flip the rock to make it fit just where it was needed. This took all morning; we finished the first rock just in time for a late lunch.

After eating we moved more rocks into place, and by late afternoon hikers were already using the new crossing. It's hard to convey in words both the challenge and feeling of accomplishment that comes with a job well done.

We will have more outings beginning in early spring, so please join us. Contact Crew Chief Chris Reyling at 914-953-4900 or chrisreyling@gmail.com, for more information.



The Long Distance Trails Crew braved chilly, wet conditions to install new stepping stones.

West Jersey Trail Crew 2014 Report: From Stokes to High Point to Wawayanda

By Monica & David Day, Crew Chiefs

In 2014, the West Jersey Crew lived up to its name, working all over the western portion of the state.

In Tillman's Ravine in Stokes State Forest, the crew removed blowdowns, reset two bridges, and repaired trail damage from Hurricane Sandy. Also in Stokes State Forest, a relocation of a stream crossing on the Lackner Trail included the construction of an 18-foot long wooden bridge.

In High Point State Park, the crew relocated a stream crossing away from a steep gravel bank, replaced an 8-foot high wooden staircase at a road crossing, and built a 25-step rock staircase in a deeply eroded area. On the Appalachian Trail (AT) in High Point, the side trail to the Rutherford Shelter was relocated, eliminating a steep and exposed route. Work on the AT also took place in Stokes State Forest, where the crew repaired and stabilized the steep initial climb southbound from Rt. 206 with rock steps, side-hilling, and water bars. And in Wawayanda State Park, the crew installed 360 feet of new puncheon in a chronically wet field near Vernon on the AT. The crew also began work repairing and upgrading the Cedar Swamp Trail boardwalk in Wawayanda.

Thank you to everyone who worked as part of the West Jersey Crew in 2014: Alan Abramowitz, Ian Blundell, Jean Brennen, Paul Brennan, Gordon Campbell, Joan Campbell, Tom Carr, Sharon

Depuy, Peter Dolan, Matt Donnelly, Heather Guinta, Ray Gridley, Shelley Harvey, Michael Hild, Ted Jackson, Bob Jonas, Gay Mayer, Nick McKenna, Jim Mott, Lee Mott, Steve Reiss, Keith Scherer, Barbara Simmons, Rabindra Singh, Bill Taggart, Linda Taggart, Jim Tizio, Lucy Weinman, and Pete Zuroff.

And finally, a huge thanks to our New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection partners at the state parks, who consistently support our work by transporting our materials, providing their facilities, and lending us equipment. Without this support, we would not be able to do what we do.

After the winter off, the crew will begin work for the spring in mid-April; come join us! More information and a crew schedule can be found at www.nynjtc.org/content/west-jersey-trail-crew.



The West Jersey Trail Crew resumes work in mid-April.

Learn, Hike, Give Back: Opportunities with the Catskills Conservation Corps

By Heather Rolland, Catskill Assistant Program Coordinator

Does the staff of the Catskills Conservation Corps hibernate? No way! Although the winter saw a dearth of snow here in the Catskills, the CCC has kept its crampons on and its collective nose to the grindstone! Winter means planning, organizing, and hiking for the CCC staff, and we've been doing plenty that.

Planning for a great work season

The CCC staff met with New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) land managers and rangers in both regions 3 and 4 to discuss trail work priorities and make preliminary plans for a number of trail work projects and workshops to be scheduled this coming work season. Rangers and forestry staff have also shared feedback about ongoing programs and issues—we've been grateful to get that important input so we can continue to streamline our efforts and work together even more effectively.

Some workshop ideas are still under construction, but we will be sure to offer a number of valuable volunteer training opportunities. A fun and interactive workshop on tool safety will be offered, as well as classes on trail layout and design, and basic trail maintenance. And we'll continue to provide hiker education workshops such as map reading, basic navigation skills, seasonal hiking tips, and more.

So what's on deck for the work season?

We're excited about working with the Catskills Regional Invasive Species Partnership (CRISP) and the DEC on an invasive species project in the southern Catskills; our kick-off event at Russell Brook Falls on May 2 is shaping up to be a wonderful collaboration and a great opportunity for lots of volunteers to come out and have fun while making a difference. We'll be hand-pulling knotweed from the banks of the stream to restore the view of the falls.

Also on the schedule, the Devil's Acre lean-to rehab project will take place June 13 and 14. Thanks to some great networking by Hunter Fire Tower Committee Chair Gordon Hoekstra, we will partner with a scout troop and other organizations to get that banged out in



one weekend. This project will include reroofing the lean-to and moving the privy. Once again, many hands will make light work of it all.

There are other lean-tos to be stained and privies to be moved. There are wet and muddy trails that will see stepping stones or split log bridges built, and many other possible trail projects that land managers are carefully evaluating. We are working closely with DEC staff, and eagerly anticipate receiving approvals for additional projects this spring.

Work days already being scheduled include at least two litter pick-ups during the summer targeting areas of the Catskills prone to this appalling behavior. We look forward to the day when we no longer have to plan for such tasks, but until that happens, we're committed to doing regular cleanups.

We're also committed to completing the hiking trail we started on the grounds of the soon-to-be-open Catskill Interpretive Center in Mount Tremper. Volunteer trail builders, start blocking out work days for swinging your mattocks—we'll need plenty of strong backs to finish.

Come Join Us

Care to lend a hand and make a difference? Connect with the CCC by filling out the interest form on our website: <http://catskillconservationcorps.org>. Volunteering with the CCC is a great way to get out into the woods and experience an incredible sense of accomplishment and pride. Be a part of something wonderful. Volunteer with the CCC this work season and discover just how much fun hard work can be!

RPH Cabin Volunteers Prep for New Season

By Tim Messerich

Trail Conference member club Ralph's Peak Hikers' Cabin Volunteers are prepping for their eighth season of trail work, which is slated to kick off with the cabin opening and cleanup on April 4 in Hopewell Junction, NY. Join them Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. for trail restoration projects, which this year include replanting the Gerry Messerich Memorial Flower Garden, painting two bridges, reinstalling a 40-foot, uphill section of washed out stone steps in Fahnestock State Park (in collaboration with fellow member club Jolly Rovers Trail Crew), installing a bulletin board kiosk at the Appalachian Trailhead on Route 301 in Fahnestock, and clearing the 20 miles of the Appalachian Trail that the club maintains. Many projects are expected to be completed during the club's annual campout at RPH Cabin, taking place July 10-12. All are welcome. For more information, email Tim Messerich (bascomgrillmaster@yahoo.com) or visit <http://rphcabin.org>.

Catskill Park Awareness Day



On February 10, dozens of representatives from the Trail Conference and a number of other organizations attended the third annual Catskill Park Awareness Day in Albany. During this day of advocacy, we educate lawmakers about the importance of the Catskill Park and the Catskill Forest Preserve to the region's local communities, to visitors, and to New York State. For a recap of our requests from lawmakers, visit our blog: <http://blog-tw.nynjtc.org/catskill-park-awareness-day-2015>.



Not everyone was shopping at the malls on a mid-December weekend—some were out improving our trails. A couple of small bridges and bog bridges were replaced along the Long Path in the New Jersey section of the Palisades Interstate Park just north of Rockefeller Lookout. Christina Fehre from PIPC brought in the lumber and was the crew leader. With 11 people, it took only three hours to finish the job. Clockwise from top left: Matt, Fred, Michael, Chris, Karl, John, Joel, Dennis, Anna, and Christina. Photo by Jakob Franke, Long Path co-chair. Thank you all!

View from the trail:
There's no winter hibernation for our volunteers and staff.



Len Lyon was out hiking in Harriman on Dec. 22, 2014, when he came across two Trail Conference members completing a beautiful new bridge across Pine Meadows Creek above the Cascade of Slid. "This is not just a bridge," Len says, "this is a work of art." He sent this photo of John Mack, our volunteer Trails Chair for the South Hudson region, at work. Thank you for sharing, Len!

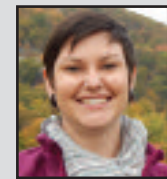


The Trail Conference staff thanks REI for our snappy new branded vests and shirts—gear we'll proudly wear as we head out to protect and preserve even more parks and trails this season.

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 summer *Trail Walker*, submissions must be received by May 4. For consideration, send content to tw@nynjtc.org.

Ask a Trail Builder

By Ama Koenigshof, Trail Builder/Educator



Why build stairs on a trail? Doesn't that defeat the purpose of walking through nature?

A staircase on a trail in the woods does not always feel natural. Steps can take away from the feeling that many hikers are looking for—the feeling that they are in the wilderness far from human influence. But stairs aren't built to add pretty landscaping to your hike—sometimes they are simply a necessity.

Depending on soil type and the number of people using it, a trail can only stand up to a certain slope before it turns into a gully. Consider this: Each hiker's feet compact and displace a very small amount of earth that is the trail's tread. This creates a minuscule divot for water to get caught in every time it rains, causing erosion of the soil. Eventually, you'd be hiking up a stream every time it rains. To escape this man-made river and the mud it creates, you'd hike up along the edge of the path, causing the trail to widen. The end result is a detrimental environmental impact, not to mention a subpar hiking experience.



The Long Distance Trails Crew and Trail Conference member club Ralph's Peak Hikers Cabin Volunteer Club built 17 new, enormous stone steps on a steep, eroded section of the Appalachian Trail.

The most permanent solution to this problem is a trail reroute that makes the tread less steep. But trails that are less steep must be longer to take us where we want to go—up, to the top of the mountain. When a reroute isn't an option, well-built stairs are the answer. Stairs are a form of tread hardening. A rock or even a log is going to take a lot longer to wear away than sandy soil. Plus, they can help you gain a lot of rise over a short run. The trick is getting people to use the stairs you build.

Trail building is the intersection of science and art. A structurally sound staircase that isn't built with hiker psychology in mind may be ignored. If stairs don't fit in with the surroundings, they may actually persuade some hikers to take a detour, which only exacerbates the original problem. On the flip side, a harmonious, natural-looking staircase may fall apart in the matter of a season if it's not structurally sound. Finding the confluence of the necessary strength and beauty is a challenge that requires awareness of the big picture as well as the smallest detail. And it takes practice.

You can practice by checking out trail tread while you are hiking. Ask yourself: "Is it eroded? What is keeping water on the trail? Why aren't people staying on the trail? What do I like/not like about this staircase? Are these stairs comfortable to climb? Why/why not? What makes people use/not use this staircase?"

A good trail builder will understand the trail and its users and build to those needs and desires.

Learn, Serve, Teach: The Trail Conference Conservation Corps

The New York-New Jersey Trail Conference's Conservation Corps trains, enables, and empowers future conservation leaders by teaching sustainable trail building and stewardship techniques. Our AmeriCorps members then use those skills to engage and teach community volunteers and trail users about the responsible use and care of open space, as well as the Trail Conference mission. It is this relationship between Corps members and volunteers that makes the program such a success.

Our AmeriCorps members receive a high-quality learning experience while performing meaningful service throughout our parks. Their extensive training

includes improving trail and land quality through sustainable building and restoration solutions as members of our trail crews. Through that experience, they become leaders in recruiting, training, and retaining a diverse pool of volunteers for the Trail Conference. AmeriCorps members do not replace staff or existing volunteers, but aid and enhance our existing capacities.

In 2015, the Trail Conference will field

five AmeriCorps crews comprised of 22 AmeriCorps members, as well as all volunteers interested in joining crew projects. These include the Megalithic Trail Crew working on the Bear Mountain Trails Project, the Palisades Crew serving in Sterling Forest State Park, the Taconic Crew working in Fahnestock and Hudson Highlands State Parks, the Long Path/SRT Crew serving the Long Path and Shawangunk

Ridge Trail, and the Invasives Strike Force, which battles exotic invasive plant species on all of the Trail Conference trail corridors.

Our AmeriCorps program is made possible by an Education Award Program grant from The Corps Network, which has enabled the Trail Conference to manage and run its own independent AmeriCorps program since 2014. To find out more about our Corps projects this season and how to volunteer with a crew, check out www.nynjtc.org/corps.



Trail Conference Adopts the HikeSafe Hiker Responsibility Code

HikeSafe, a set of six simple guidelines for being prepared in the wilderness, was developed in the White Mountains of New Hampshire, where hiking is both immensely popular and potentially dangerous due to the ruggedness of the area and the potential for severe weather. The Trail Conference, along with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the Catskill 3500 Club, have brought the hikeSafe program's Hiker Responsibility Code to the Catskills, where we have our fair share of rugged, remote, and beautiful trails. We look forward to promoting safe hiking and good stewardship through the Code with our hikeSafe partners. For more information, contact Catskill Assistant Program Coordinator Heather Rolland at hrolland@nynjtc.org.



The Hiker Responsibility Code

You are responsible for yourself, so be prepared:

With knowledge and gear. Become self-reliant by learning about the terrain, conditions, local weather, and your equipment before you start.

To leave your plans. Tell someone where you are going, the trails you are hiking, when you will return, and your emergency plans.

To stay together. When you start as a group, hike as a group, end as a group. Pace your hike to the slowest person.

To turn back. Weather changes quickly in the mountains. Fatigue and unexpected conditions can also affect your hike. Know your limitations and when to postpone your hike. The mountains will be there another day.

For emergencies. Even if you are headed out for just an hour, an injury, severe weather, or a wrong turn could become life threatening. Don't assume you will be rescued; know how to rescue yourself.

To share the hiker code with others.

A Day's Hike On The Siwanoy Trail

We walked through brush thick with tangles and full of thorns, caught often by the strangle of the overgrown landscape.

We trekked on, then guided by freedom's pathways through the woods of Pelham Bay.

We knew that to reach the clearing and the shoreline and the shade of the perfectly placed tree was to rest in friendship, to enjoy a lunch, to share the time to smile at stillness and the heat of the Sun at midday.

We kept the trail and we found the rocks and the water and the breeze that glides across it. We sat among a circle of boulders around a basin of gleaming brown mud and ate the lunch and talked our ups and downs and tried to make sense of paths and entanglements.

We witnessed a world of finger-length crabs that knew only of that crab world, that knew only of the food to find and the cool of hiding and the danger of desiccation.

That knew only of a place to defend, to advance to skitter sideways and backwards and swing their claws in an arena strewn with myriad shellfish death.

We realized that they could only know that crab world, that world that they could only make by being crabs.

A world of crustacean excavation, and paths and entanglements, a world preempted by the swooping shadows, and in some ways not unlike our own.

—Stan Sherr

Trail Conference volunteer Stanley Sherr, an artist and poet who maintained the Cabot Trail in Fahnestock State Park for 16 years, recently hung up his clippers and retired. In honor of his service and dedication to trails, we're publishing one of his poems that captures the beauty of hiking in and around the Hudson Valley. You can find more of his work at stanleysherr.com.

Registration Open for Black Rock Forest Consortium Summer Science Camp

Teens in search of outdoor adventure can find it at the Black Rock Forest Consortium's Summer Science Camp in Cornwall, NY. Now in its third full year, the 10-week-long sleep-away and day camp programs offer science, nature, and art immersion classes for students in grades 6 through 12. From lessons in writing about nature to a hands-on introduction to ornithology, middle and high school students learn about the outdoors while exploring their wild surroundings. Registration is now open; Trail Conference members receive a 10 percent discount. For more information, visit www.blackrockforest.org or call 845-534-4517.



Wish Fulfilled: A Last Hike on the Appalachian Trail

By Peter Dolan, New Jersey Program Coordinator and Keith Lyons, Hiker

Last summer, Keith Lyons contacted the Trail Conference office asking for hike information. On the surface, this request was similar to countless other calls—Keith wanted our help in planning a trip. He recalled a past trip on the Appalachian Trail that had meant a lot to him, and wanted to try replicating it. There was one thing that made this call stand out, however: Keith was planning what would most likely be his last hiking trip.

Keith was undergoing treatment for prostate cancer, with a prognosis that did not leave him much time. He spoke fondly of the Rutherford Shelter at High Point State Park, where he had taken his godson Jimmy camping years before. Now too weak to hike to the shelter with a pack full of gear, Keith asked if we could help him access the shelter via a woods road.

Three people—High Point State Park Superintendent Rebecca Fitzgerald and New Jersey AT co-Chairs Gene Giordano and Pete Zuroff—put their heads together and recommended the nearby High Point shelter, with its easy access via a gated road. Keith was ecstatic that his dream of one last camping trip with his godson might



Keith and his godson Jimmy met with Rebecca Fitzgerald, High Point superintendent, before their hike.

become a reality, and on August 16, he arrived at High Point with Jimmy. He asked us to share his story, transcribed in his words below:

"These few parcels of land are magical, healing places that must be maintained."

"While at High Point we went to a concert where an Irish band played. At sunset, we night-hiked back to the shelter listening to great music. The last day we walked to the AT. On the trail to the left was Pennsylvania,

and straight ahead, New York. I told Jimmy, 'We walk this trail together.' I pointed towards New York. I said, 'You'll walk this trail without me.' He looked at me and said he understood."

"While we were packing, Jimmy mentioned to me that we didn't see many animals, but we met some great people: Mad Max from Germany, NYU from Brooklyn, and Leslie from New Jersey. On his first hiking trip, Jimmy said he would bring his friends backpacking to High Point one day. I knew then the circle was complete."

—Copperhead and Hawk (Trail names of Keith Lyons and Jimmy Connolly)

Sometimes it's easy to take what we do at the Trail Conference for granted. To be blessed with the means and opportunity to enjoy our local parks and forests—whether as a casual hiker or an active trail volunteer—is a privilege that we should never forget. Keith's story, and the incredible gratitude he has exhibited for the chance to take one last hike, is a reminder of how lucky many of us are to be able to enjoy treasures like these on a whim.

Keith wanted us to share his story to show how important these trails are, and how the experiences formed there can last a lifetime. So as you go about your days, enjoying the beauty of spring unfolding, remember to be grateful for the public lands we all work to keep open to everyone.

Happy trails.



PEOPLE FOR TRAILS



Joe Ennesser
Wappinger, NY

The success of the Hudson River Valley Greenway is thanks to dedicated people like Joe Ennesser, a true champion of outdoor recreation in the region. The Chairman of the Wappinger Greenway Committee, Ennesser was instrumental in creating the 11-mile trail network in and around the Town of Wappinger that is part of the larger, state-sanctioned Greenway all along the Hudson. Though Ennesser's eyeing retirement from his post this spring, he's not finished making his mark on the Wappinger Greenway quite yet.

Preserving greenspace in Wappinger: Ennesser joined the Wappinger Greenway Committee in 1998 thanks to his involvement with the Town of Wappinger Recreation Commission. Along with then-chairman Hank DiMarco, he worked on securing grants for the project. When DiMarco passed away, Ennesser asked the committee if he could step into the role to further push the project forward. "And here I am," he says, "still pushing." In 2006, the 11 miles of the Wappinger Greenway Trail was recognized by New York State. The white-blazed walking route links natural, historic, industrial, and business districts in the Town of Wappinger, the Village of Wappingers Falls, and the Town of Poughkeepsie in New York's Dutchess County.

Volunteerism as a second career: "I've dedicated myself to recreation and keeping things in its natural state whenever possible," says Ennesser, who has lived in Wappinger for 50 years. Those efforts go back to raising his children and getting involved in youth programs like baseball and soccer. "Thank god for IBM; they gave me a lot of community time off," says the retired mechanical engineer, who worked for the company for 38 years.

What's next for the Wappinger Greenway: "We added five more miles of trail to head south to the Town of Fishkill over the last four years," Ennesser says. "We're putting the finishing touches on that right now. Once that's done I think I'll retire." And then what will he be up to? "As little as possible," Ennesser laughs. "But I'll still dabble."

St John's in the Wilderness Is a Sanctuary for Hikers

By Thomas Parliment, PhD and Vicar Richard Jeske, PhD

Ever driven between Route 106 and Lake Welch Parkway in Harriman State Park and wondered about that beautiful stone church? It resembles one of those stone parish churches out of the English countryside, something you might find envisioned in the novels of the Bronte sisters. What is an active church doing in middle of the park, anyway?

The church's history has a special relationship to the hiking community. Built in 1880, it was originally named St. John the Evangelist. But in the 1920s, an anonymous hiker hung a sign on the front door with the words "St. John's in the Wilderness"—and ever since, that has been its name, listed as such in the current directory of the Episcopal Diocese of New York. Each year, on Palm Sunday, the church recognizes its special connection to outdoor enthusiasts by holding a Hikers Service, followed by a festive luncheon in the rustic barn across the street.

St. John's in the Wilderness traces its origin to Ms. Elizabeth Zimmerman, who funded its construction as a memorial for her husband after his sudden death on their honeymoon in 1878. She chose a 250-acre parcel of land north of Tuxedo, NY, and donated it and the finances to build St. John's to the Diocese of New York. In 1880 the cornerstone was laid, the building was completed using the plentiful fieldstone of the area, and the church was dedicated and opened for public worship under the ministerial leadership of the Rev. A. Warren Merrick.

In 1883 the church opened its facilities for use as a home and school for orphaned boys, adding a library and reading room for use by the small surrounding community as well. The stained glass windows inside the church tell much about the history of St. John's, as do the engravings on the headstones in the churchyard outside.

With the establishment of Harriman State Park in 1910, the church was left with 49 acres of land, which can accommodate the planned extension of the cemetery



St. John's in the Wilderness holds a special Hikers Service every year on Palm Sunday.

when that becomes economically feasible. Today, St. John's is a welcoming place with a vibrant and energetic congregation, featuring programs like the Music on the Mountain concert series, which is open to the public on Sunday afternoons during the warm weather months. A visit to St. John's is a walk through another place in time, making it a lovely venue for weddings, while receptions, reunions, and other events are held in its rustic barn.

Many opportunities for hikers exist at St. John's in the Wilderness. (Parking at the church, however, is reserved for church activities only. There is no parking allowed on St. John's Road, either.) The Long Path passes within 200 meters of the church, providing access to many portions of Harriman Park. The Big Hill shelter is about a 40-minute hike, as is Breakneck Pond. The Second and Third reservoirs are easily reached, as are the Suffern-Bear Mountain, Beech, and Breakneck Mountain trails. For history seekers, both the Barnes mine and Christie mine are

close by, while the largest airplane crash in Harriman (a Boeing 727) occurred about ½ mile from the church in 1974. Remnants of that plane can still be found.

You are invited to attend St. John's annual Palm Sunday service for hikers at 3 p.m. on March 29, followed by a festive buffet luncheon hosted by the parishioners at 4. All are welcome to participate in this long-standing tradition.

St. John's in the Wilderness Church is located at 16 Johnstown Road in Stony Point, NY. Regular services are held every Sunday at 12:30 p.m. Visit www.stjohnsinthewilderness.org or call 845-786-0366 for more info.

Thomas Parliment is a long-time New York-New Jersey Trail Conference member, AMC hike leader, and retired chemist. Rev. Richard Jeske is the Vicar of St. John's in the Wilderness Church.



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Trail Conference Leading Regional Efforts to Combat Invasives

By Linda Rohleder, Ph.D., Director of Land Stewardship and Lower Hudson PRISM Coordinator

2014 was the first full year of the Lower Hudson Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM) operation after the Trail Conference received our contract to organize the effort from New York State in August 2013. The purpose of PRISM is to coordinate all of the organizations in eight counties across the region who are working on invasive species and to develop and execute a regional strategy.

As leaders of the Lower Hudson PRISM, the Trail Conference convened several meetings of local organizations to complete our five-year strategic plan and the 2014 annual work plan with goals, objectives, actions, and outcomes. We signed 40 partners who have committed to support the strategy of PRISM and provide a recap of their invasive species activities for our annual report. The list of partners can be seen on our web site, www.lhprism.org.



The Lower Hudson PRISM funded six projects, including surveys of aquatic invasive species in Greenwood Lake, determining the extent of hydrilla infestation in the Croton River, removal of a hardy kiwi population in Pound Ridge, investigation of impacts of invasive species

on threatened and endangered animals, collection of information about valued conservation areas to protect, and support of an educational and demonstration project to remove Japanese knotweed and develop a watershed plan in Dutchess County. Five PRISM interns worked on projects including mapping (GIS) for use in invasives surveillance, managing invasives data, interviewing local land managers, and conducting workshops and recruiting volunteers.

The Lower Hudson PRISM made a concerted effort to participate in New York State's first Invasive Species Awareness Week, July 6-13. We conducted more than 25 events during this week—approximately one quarter of all the events held in the state. Further spreading the word, the Trail Conference's Linda Rohleder represented our region at PRISM Leaders meetings and at an invasive species conference at Cornell, and gave presentations and educational talks about invasives at numerous events.

The Trail Conference's own Invasives Strike Force continues to grow and contribute to efforts in both New York and New Jersey. This past year we had just over 100 volunteers who surveyed 286 miles of trail throughout the area, the equivalent of almost 3,500 acres surveyed. The data they collected resulted in over 13,500 observations. We also held more than a dozen volunteer work days to remove invasives, and our seasonal summer crew worked at more than 20 locations performing removals and working with other regional teams to impact almost 120 acres.

Our 2015 season promises to be just as active and productive. Join us as an Invasives Strike Force volunteer surveyor or on our removal crew. Go to <http://nynjtc.org/invasives> to find more information.



Columbine begins blossoming in mid-May and continues blooming until late June.

MIKE ADAMOVIC

Welcoming the Return of Red Columbine

By Mike Adamovic

In late spring, shortly after the woods have attained a fresh layering of youthful green and march toward the mature days of summer, red columbine buds from the understory and makes a striking appearance, adding a dash of crimson to the verdant sea that surrounds. Out of all the spring ephemeral wildflowers, this delicate plant is most likely to capture the attention of a passer-by. The chandelier-like blossoms, which are mostly red but sport a rich, golden underside, possess a magical and audacious charm.

Red columbine is a wide-ranging perennial that occupies the eastern half of the United States. Flowers are typically 1.5 inches long with the plants growing 1-2 feet tall; columbine begins blossoming in mid-May and continues blooming until late June. The species has an affinity for slightly alkaline to neutral soil, and it's able to thrive in places most other plants can't



MIKE ADAMOVIC

Hummingbirds are attracted to Red Columbine.

assist in achieving a long-lasting love, and appropriately used it to concoct love charms. Europeans, however, believed the flower symbolizes infidelity or the departing of a lover.

Despite conflicting lore, columbine is ideal to add to a home garden. The seeds are relatively simple to propagate and plants live up to 5 years. Also, as the leaves are toxic to deer and rabbits, no effort has to be undertaken to protect plants from woodland raiders. However, this is one flower sure to draw dainty ruby-throated hummingbirds to your yard. Columbine also goes by the nickname of "wild honeysuckle," as the nectar reservoirs located at the top of the flowers offer a saccharine treat if imbibed. Be it by taste or by sight, red columbine is likely to leave an indelibly sweet impression on all lucky enough to encounter it.

Mike Adamovic is a professional photographer who owns and manages Adamovic Nature Photography. He enjoys hiking throughout the Hudson Valley and backpacking the Appalachian Trail.



When was the last time you thought about your legacy?

By including a bequest to the Trail Conference in your will, you will help us continue the legacy of trails and connecting people with nature for generations to come.

For information, contact Don Weise, dweise@nynjtc.org, or call 201-512-9348, ext. 13

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TRAIL NEWS ROUNDUP

continued from page 3

Park and High Tor State Park when the New York State Department of Transportation required the Clarkstown Planning Department to close access from Long Clove Road to Route 9W in order to develop another access road for the local quarry. Upon petitions from volunteers Win Perry, Dick Katzive, and several others, the town quickly agreed to provide the Trail Conference with a trail easement, protecting the future of the Path. A warm thank you also to Senator David Carlucci's office for their support of this request. Both the senator and Clarkstown officials have been strong supporters of trails. Thank you to all of our members and volunteers, including Win, Dick, Marek Stycos, chair of member club Thendara Mountain Club, and all others for their quick action and support.

Trail Conference Awarded Grant by Hudson River Foundation

The New York-New Jersey Trail Conference was awarded a grant of \$18,000 from the Hudson River Foundation's Hudson River Improvement Fund to support upgrades to the Pete and Toshi Seeger Riverfront Park in Beacon, NY.

Located on the shore with direct access to the Hudson River, the newly renamed Pete and Toshi Seeger Riverfront Park (formerly Riverfront Park) is open and free to the public, making it a popular spot that receives a high volume of visitors each year. The proposed project will enhance and promote the natural scenic and cultural resources of the Hudson River and the park by installing 10 new high-quality benches, rehabilitating the entire half-mile trail system, and installing an educational kiosk. The kiosk will highlight the significant habitat restoration and rehabilitation of the park—previously a garbage dump—spearheaded by the Seegers.

Because of the long-lasting impact the project will have on waterfront access for future generations, the City of Beacon has committed a match towards the park improvements, representing approximately three quarters of the total cost.



Columbine thrives where other plants can't grow.

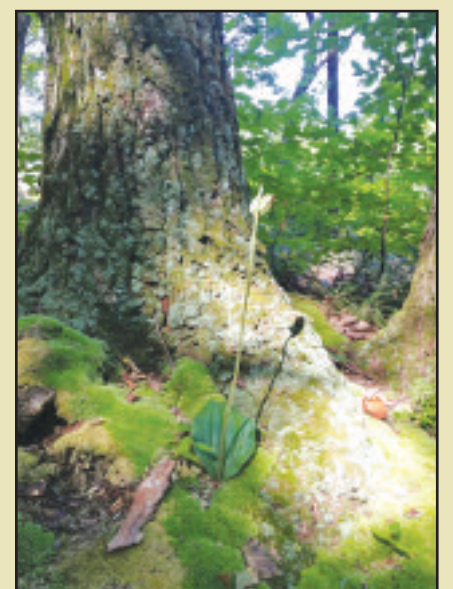
MIKE ADAMOVIC

even gain a minor foothold. It's not uncommon to find these flowers sprouting from a vertical cliff face, as the roots are able to penetrate the tiniest of cracks and subsist on the barest amounts of soil. Columbine is also apt to be found gracing spongy beds of moss deep within open and somewhat sunny forests.

It's not surprising that a flower of such extraordinary beauty also boasts an impressive amount of lore. Native Americans believed columbine possesses the power to

It's Wildflower Season

It's time to keep your eyes peeled for emerging early spring blooms, such as the diminutive trout lily (*Erythronium americanum*) and spring beauty (*Claytonia virginica*), and even the rare bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*). Glimpses of spring flowers are becoming rarer as the plants diminish in our forests due to the dual impact of heavy deer browsing and invasive species overcrowding. You can help with the latter by volunteering with our Invasives Strike Force, which monitors and controls non-native plants along hiking trails. For more info, visit www.nynjtc.org/invasives.



Keep your eyes open for glimpses of spring wildflowers.

Another New Trail Shoe Trend

By Howard E. Friedman, DPM

Extra-thick-soled hiking shoes are being promoted this spring, with extra-thick hiking boots soon to follow. Some of these products, referred to as “maximalist” shoes, have soles that are more than three times as thick as standard hiking shoes. While maximalist shoes have been around for a few years, they were mostly a boutique product. Now, national and regional retailers like REI and Campmor are selling this unique gear.



Maximalist trail shoes stand out primarily for one feature: mid-sole material almost 1.25 inches thick, often made of a proprietary mix of ethyl vinyl acetate (EVA) foam blended with rubber to create increased cushioning. At first glance, these look like platform shoes that have no business on a rocky, uneven hiking trail. Yet, these shoes are now routinely worn by some of the most successful athletes who are winning ultra-trail marathons, like the famous Western States 100-Mile Race (Karl Meltzer) and posting speed records on the Pacific Crest Trail (Heather “Anish” Anderson) and John Muir Trail (Liz Thomas).

Proponents of “maximalist” shoes claim they promote a natural gait with less forceful impact.

Hikers, backpackers, and ultramarathoners have embraced these redesigned shoes for a few reasons. First, the generous cushioning through the mid-sole layer provides shock absorption whether on the trail or on the road. The shoes have either minimal “drop”—the height difference between the heel and the forefoot—or no drop at all. Proponents of shoes with minimal or zero drop claim they promote a natural gait with less forceful impact and allow for a more efficient functioning of the achilles tendon. Finally, maximalist shoes, now sold by mainstream brands such as Vasque, Brooks, and Skechers, in addition to the most popular manufacturers Hoka One One and Altra, generally have a wider and more anatomically shaped toe box.

A few years ago, when shoe companies promoted “barefoot” running and trail shoes like Vibram Five Fingers, they cited research and quoted biomechanics experts supporting the shoes’ benefits. Now, very few maximalist companies are citing any research backing their claims, yet the shoes are catching on with elite and recreational trail runners and hikers. Some weekend hikers claim that these cushioned, low-drop shoes with a lot of room for their toes have helped resolve nagging problems like heel pain and shin splints. One note of caution, however: The elevated design of these shoes may prove unstable to anyone prone to ankle sprains. And if you are getting good results with your current hiking shoes, then no need to switch.

Howard E. Friedman, DPM, is an avid hiker, a podiatrist in Suffern, NY, and a frequent contributor to Trail Walker. Find more of Dr. Friedman’s health tips for hikers on our website, nynjtc.org/news/health-news.



HISTORIC HUDSON RIVER COTTAGES
Affordable studio, one and two bedroom homes available in historic cottage cooperative in Westchester County, off the Hudson River, one hour from NYC. Dating back to 1929, this three-season community offers swimming pool, tennis court, organic community garden, social hall with internet and social activities. \$25,000-\$100,000+. 917-880-5419. www.reynoldshills.org. Contact melgarfinkel@yahoo.com.

Announcing a Completely New and Much-Improved South Taconic Trails Map

In spring 2015, a completely new trail map covering the beautiful South Taconic Mountains becomes the latest addition to the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference’s catalog of quality maps. This third edition of *South Taconic Trails* is the first digitally produced edition of the map. In fact, it’s an entirely different and vastly improved upgrade from the previous 2006 edition.

Made by the people who build the trails, this map features more than 100 miles of marked trails throughout the South Taconic Mountains, which extend over three states—Dutchess and Columbia Counties in New York, Berkshire County in Massachusetts, and Litchfield County in Connecticut. A particularly valuable feature of the map is its inclusion of approximately 34 miles of the Appalachian Trail passing through Massachusetts and Connecticut. The 16-mile-long South Taconic Trail is shown in its entirety, with an additional six-mile extension shown as “under construction” while Trail Conference crews work on the ambitious project, anticipated to be completed in late 2015.

This edition contains a number of enhancements over the previous analog map. All of Taconic State Park now appears on a single map, which also includes several nearby parks and preserves with trails of their own. Contour intervals have been increased from 100 feet to 20 feet for easier identification of steep terrain. Trail mileage figures, representing distances between trail junctions, now appear on the map front. In addition, an enlarged inset map shows more detail of trails in the popular Bash Bish area and adjacent state park campground area at Copake Falls.

The entire trail network in the South Taconics has been completely replotted using state-of-the-art Global Positioning System (GPS) technology and high-resolution aerial imagery. Trail Conference



volunteers spent numerous hours walking the trails with GPS receivers to obtain accurate trail data and identify viewpoints, campsites and shelters, parking areas, and other points of interest. Special thanks goes out to volunteer project manager Kay Cynamon, who not only helped manage the new map but also GPSed the majority of the trails on the map. (See her *People for Trails* profile to the right.)

The area this new map covers has been expanded to 17 parks and preserves, including Taconic State Park, Bash Bish Falls State Park, Mount Washington State Forest, Mount Everett Reservation, Jug End Reservation, and Mount Riga State Park. Additional map features include UTM gridlines, green overprint for public access lands, parking areas, viewpoints, and other points of interest. As always, the maps are printed in vibrant color on waterproof, tear-resistant Tyvek.

At only \$6.95 (\$5.21 for Trail Conference members), this long-awaited and much anticipated map is a must-have for enjoying the bountiful outdoor experiences throughout the South Taconics region. To obtain the new printed map, shop online at www.nynjtc.org, call 201-512-9348, or stop in at the Trail Conference office. The map is also available in digital format on Apple and Android devices through the PDF Maps app; learn more about our GPS-enhanced maps at www.nynjtc.org/pdfmaps.

Visit trailpubs.nynjtc.org and click on the South Taconic Trails cover panel for additional resources, including suggested hikes, park contact information, and much more!

CAMP MOR

This map set was produced with support from Campmor, an outdoor store and retail partner of the Trail Conference.

New Harriman-Bear Mountain Trail Maps Are In

Our new, 2015 edition of the Harriman-Bear Mountain Trails map set is now available and has already received rave reviews for its inclusion of detailed trail mileage numbers along the trails. This revision, featuring several additions and improvements, is the most significant update since 2007. It’s a must-have for exploring the huge trail network throughout Harriman and Bear Mountain State Parks. The maps are available in print on waterproof, tear-resistant Tyvek as well as in digital format through Avenza’s PDF Maps app. Learn more about the maps on our website.



A LEGACY OF ADVOCACY

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The same recognition rings true today—that it is the hard work of a few that makes possible the enjoyment by many. In the past year alone, the Trail Conference has leapt into battle against numerous threats—including the casinos in Sterling Forest and Woodbury and the LG building atop the Hudson Palisades.

Most recently, a bill has been proposed which would allow hunting on Sundays in New Jersey. The current ban on Sunday hunting allows outdoor recreationalists of all stripes at least one day a week to enjoy the great outdoors without worrying about

the sound of gunfire (as well as its potential dangers, however small the odds). Many of our members have already expressed their dismay with this bill, which caters to a small group of outdoor enthusiasts to the detriment of all others.

We rely on a well-informed public to show that they care about these issues. By educating our members and showing ways to get involved, we hope to provide them with a voice to let their representatives know how they want their public lands treated. In return, we rely on our members to let us know about the latest threats to the trails. You can always stay up to date on the latest trail-related issues by checking out the advocacy pages on our website.

PEOPLE FOR TRAILS



Kay Cynamon
New York, NY

Kay Cynamon doesn’t exactly see the “work” in all of the volunteer work she’s done for the Trail Conference. “I just like loping around outside,” says the Manhattan-based physician, who’s been a Trail Conference member for over 20 years. “If I can be helpful and it serves a purpose to carry a GPS, that’s even better.”

Over the last two years, Cynamon and her GPS hiked and recorded the locations of more than 100 miles of marked trails in the South Taconic Mountains; thanks to her efforts, hikers can now own the latest, greatest edition of the Trail Conference’s South Taconic Trails map. “The hiking itself is not hard,” Cynamon says. “The only hard thing for me is traveling 100-150 miles to get there!” (She’s looking forward to the day cars drive themselves, she explains.)

Cynamon began volunteering in the South Taconic region as an accidental maintainer. About 15 years ago, she took a hike up Alander Mountain through overgrown trails. She wrote to the Trail Conference about the problem, and received a response asking if she’d like to help fix the situation by becoming a maintainer. “I figured since I’d mouthed off I should say yes,” Cynamon recalls. “Gradually, I adopted about six miles of trails up there, which is kind of ridiculous for a volunteer,” she laughs.

Off the trails, Cynamon served as the South Taconic map’s project manager and researcher. “I get so much enjoyment out of hiking and being outdoors, and everything about it,” Cynamon says. “The opportunity to give back so other people can enjoy these trails makes me very happy.”

You’ll be able to find that enthusiasm in her next project with the Publications Committee: a trails guidebook to Morris County, NJ.

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Featured Hike



By Don Weise

Shake Off Winter with a Circuit Hike Up Cats Elbow



DAN BALOGH

Views of The Timp and Hudson River from the Timp-Torne Trail. Pick up a copy of our new Harriman-Bear Mountain State Parks map set featuring trail mileage figures to track your distance as you hike along.

It's spring—time to shed a few layers and stretch your legs. This Cats Elbow loop hike in Harriman State Park is 5.1 miles with a 1,440-foot elevation gain; it takes approximately 3.5 hours and offers some of the best views in the park. This spring, the Trail Conference will be publishing a brand new guide to loop hikes in the park titled *Circuit Hikes in Harriman* by our Membership and Development Director Don Weise. A fully detailed description of this route will be featured in the book; until then, enjoy this sneak peek at the guide.

Trail Access: Take the Palisades Interstate Parkway to Exit 17 (Anthony Wayne Recreation Area) which is three miles southwest of Bear Mountain Bridge. Proceed past the first parking lot, then turn left at a sign for the "Far South Parking Lot," continue through this very large parking lot, and park at the southern end of the lot, near a kiosk and picnic benches.

Description: From the kiosk at the southern end of the parking area, proceed south on the Horn Hill Bike Path, with blue-on-white diamond blazes, entering a white pine forest. After crossing a fourth bridge, you'll pass a small knoll on the left and cross the white-blazed Appalachian Trail (AT). After crossing the AT, be on the lookout

for the red-dot-on-white-blazed Ramapo-Dunderberg (R-D) Trail. You will be following the R-D Trail for the next 1.65 miles. After climbing steeply to a broad west-facing viewpoint, the trail bears right and continues to climb, soon reaching a panoramic viewpoint at the top of the Cats Elbow. This vantage point offers views of the Hudson River, the Palisades, and the New York City skyline. Here, 1.3 miles from the start, the yellow-blazed Suffern-Bear Mountain (S-BM) Trail joins from the right.

The R-D and S-BM Trails run together for about 300 feet to a small ledge. You should continue straight ahead following the red-dot-on-white-blazed R-D Trail, which crosses a high, fire-scarred plateau with limited views. The trail descends briefly and traverses a section of rugged, exposed volcanic rock. There are excellent views of the Timp and the Hudson River from here.

After crossing an intermittent stream, the trail steeply climbs a rocky slope, turning right at the top. Pay careful attention to the blazes, as this sharp right turn is easy to miss. Descend to Timp Pass; you will notice the Red Cross Trail on your right, the R-D Trail proceeding straight ahead, and the unmarked Timp Pass Road on your left. You have now traveled a total of 2.35 miles.

Turn left (north) on Timp Pass Road. In 0.1 mile, watch for the blue-blazed Timp-

Torne Trail. Make a sharp left here and follow the Timp-Torne Trail up the stone steps. The Timp-Torne Trail will be your route for the next 1.45 miles. The trail now climbs steadily over exposed rocks to the West Mountain Shelter (built in 1928), a good place to break for lunch. The shelter affords panoramic views of the Timp, the Hudson River and the New York City skyline.

Continue ahead on the blue-blazed Timp-Torne Trail. In 500 feet, the yellow-blazed S-BM Trail joins from the right. Bear left here and begin to follow the co-aligned Timp-Torne and S-BM Trails, with blue and yellow blazes. Just ahead on your left are views of the Cats Elbow section of West Mountain, where you hiked earlier in the day. After traversing the highest part of West Mountain, the two trails split at 3.45 miles. Continue straight ahead, now once again following only the blue blazes of the Timp-Torne Trail.

In another 0.15 mile, you'll reach a T-intersection, marked by a wooden signpost. To your left is Jackie Jones Mountain, with its large communications tower and much smaller fire tower. Straight ahead is Black

Mountain—the closest summit from this vantage point.

After taking in the views, turn left and begin to follow the white-blazed Appalachian Trail (AT). After following a rather eroded trail, the AT turns sharp right down a set of steps and continues to descend on a long switchback, following a more sustainable and attractive route constructed in 2014 by the Trail Conference Long Distance Trails Crew (LDTC). This relocation features stone steps, massive crib walls, and giant stepping stones at the stream crossing. (For a full account of the work done by this crew on West Mountain, visit our blog: <http://blog-tw.nynjtc.org>.) The AT crosses Beechy Bottom Road diagonally to the left at 4.3 miles, immediately descending steps put in by the LDTC as part of the relocation and trail restoration. Continuing downhill on the AT, you'll intersect the Bike Path again in 0.2 mile. Turn right at the "Bike Path—Parking Lot—10 Minutes" sign. In 0.6 mile, you'll reach the parking lot where the hike began.



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