Sign Up for New Trails Project at Wonder Lake S.P. in Putnam County

By Gary Haugland

Unmarked woods roads lead to the lake and other parts of the park. For the time being, there are no maps, and other users essentially are on their own. A look at the park entrance stands blank, but once trails are constructed, the whole park will feature trails yet to be built.

Recently, Bill Bauman, manager of Wonder Lake State Park as well as of the Trail Conference, noted that he embarked on this project as a trail novice. Though he was studying industrial design at Pratt after about a decade working as a set designer in New York City for stage and television, he had “no knowledge specific to trail work. I had to get involved.” Last summer he worked with several trail crews, including with the West Hudson North Crew on the Stillman Bridge project on Storm King Mountain and with Ollie Simpson, who was building picnic tables at shelters on his section of the AT in Dutchess County. “I had to find out not only what the structures topography and scattered ravines. Most of the site is covered with mixed hardwood, beech, and wild cherry. In addition, this land is located in the southeastern portion of the property is a series of meadows surrounded by stone walls. These are abandoned orchards and, of course, Wonder Lake.

Wood roads cross the property and are most suitable for equestrian use; a network of trails for other park users needs to be built. One of these will be the Highlands Trail, which is being extended through Putnam County to the Connecticut border; it will form a core hiking trail through Wonder Lake S.P. from which loops and side trails can be built.

The Trail Conference is planning for this burst of activity by holding several trail workshops in Putnam County this spring: Layout and Design (April 4 and 5), Maintenance 101 (April 12), and Construction and Restoration (April 13). (See the complete list of spring workshops, including a Maintenance 101 in New Jersey, on page 5.) Field sessions will be conducted at Wonder Lake S.P. after classroom meetings in facilities at nearby Fahnstock S.P.

Members—especially those living in the area east of the Hudson River—are encouraged to take advantage of these workshops and help us design and build the trails and fill the maintenance slots that will open when the trails are completed.

We need to get involved,” last summer he worked with several trail crews, including with the West Hudson North Crew on the Stillman Bridge project on Storm King Mountain and with Ollie Simpson, who was building picnic tables at shelters on his section of the AT in Dutchess County. “I had to find out not only what the structures

A hiker enjoys a view of wintry Wonder Lake in January.

In 2006, however, the Trust for Public Land and the Open Space Institute negotiated the purchase of 106 adjacent acres, simultaneously expanding the park to 963 acres and providing the public access. From a parking area on Luddington-Townville Road, which runs parallel to Interstate 84 between exits 17 and 18, a single marked trail, blazed yellow, now extends into the heart of the park.

A recruitment ad in the Trail Conference challenges its members to encourage their friends, family, neighbors, and others to join the Trail Conference. Each current member who sponsors a new member will become eligible for special recognition and prizes!

March has arrived and that means it is time to go out and find new members for our second annual Member-Get-A-Member campaign! As announced in the last Trail Walker, from March 1 through May 31, 2008, the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference challenges its members to encourage their friends, family, neighbors, and others to join the Trail Conference. Each current member who sponsors a new member will become eligible for special recognition and prizes!

The members who enroll the most new members during the MGMT Campaign will win this year’s prizes, which are:

• Giant Prize: Camping Equipment Package from Campmor.
• Second Prize: One-night, mid-week stay in a Jr. suite and dinner for two at the Phoenician Restaurant at the Emerson Resort and Spa.
• Third Prize: Llamas and hiking passes for two at the Mohonk Mountain House. It’s not hard to win. Last year’s winner won the top grand prize by recruiting just seven new members!

For each new member you recruit, you will have one entry into our drawing for various outdoor goods donated by our retail partners. Items you might win include:

• 3-day free rental of outdoor equipment packages from EMS, Paramus, NJ
• Diane Executive Travel Pack Fishing Pole and Reel from Matt’s Sporting Goods, Hasbrouck, NJ
• Overnight camping package that includes a Slovenia Camping site, sleeping pad, lantern, and pot set from Ray’s Sport Shop in North Plainfield, NJ
• $50 gift certificate to Hudson Valley Outfitters in Cold Spring, NY
• $50 gift certificate to Basecamp Adventure Outfitters in Basking Ridge, NJ
• Wooden Walking Stick from Blue Ridge Mountain Sports, Madison, NJ
• $20 gift certificate to Dover Sports (in Dover, NJ)

The more new members you recruit, the better your chances are at winning any of these great prizes!

To learn how to participate, see our special insert in this edition.
Chief Ranger Timothy Sullivan has been on the job with the Palisades Interstate Park Commission (PICP) for an incredible 61-plus years. Throughout the course of that time he has been a good friend and partner to the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference and extended hiking community. In 1988, the Trail Conference recognized Sullivan’s “above the call of duty” support of hiking, hiking trails, and trail lands by honoring him with our Major William A. Welch Trail Partner Award.

In January, March was again honored, this time by his employer, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP), of which PICP is a component. OPRHP Commissioner Carol Ash presented Sullivan with a Special Service Award at a ceremony held at Saratoga Spa State Park.

“Tim’s exemplary career in the Palisades has spanned six decades, and in that time it is likely he has hiked every square inch of park property in the region,” Ash said. “He is one of New York-New Jersey’s most knowledgeable volunteers and dedicated employees. He is consulted on a daily basis in reference to a host of park related issues and his expertise is unparalleled. He is an inspiration to the agency and has left a lasting legacy.”

Sullivan began his career with State Parks in 1946 as a seasonal park patrol officer. In 1965, he was named chief ranger of the Palisades region. Throughout six decades, Sullivan also had a number of special assignments, including assisting the National Park Service with their backwoods camping surveys in Shenandoah National Parks, serving on the planning committee for the original purchase of Minnewaska State Park Preserve, and assisting with all phases of the agency’s acquisition of Sterling Forest.

“Most any time, when our maintainers have asked for something special, like signs at road crossings, or the crews have requested help with moving materials and equipment, Tim and those under him have jumped to help,” says Larry Wheelock, who often works with Sullivan on trail issues.

“Helped Elizabeth Levers relocate some sections of the AT in the ‘70s, he helped lay out the trails in the Indian Hill area of Sterling Forest, he worked closely with us through the Storm King Mountain ordinance cleanup, and has done what he could to provide materials and help when we were challenged with rebuilding bridges and other projects throughout Hartiman and Storm King State Parks.

“Not only could I think of people at his level of responsibility who have remained consistently true to his appreciation of the volunteers and their work through thick and thin.”

The Trail Conference congratulates Tim Sullivan on receiving this well deserved award.

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Additional Benefits are offered for travel outside of the United States, which you can review when you receive your Hertz Membership Discount Card. As a member of the Trail Conference, you’re given several discounts through unique partnerships we develop with retail partners. Recently, the Trail Conference added a new partnership with Hertz Rental Corporation.

The following discounts are just a few of the perks you can get from Hertz for being a Trail Conference member. Once you obtain your Hertz Membership Discount Card, you are able, within the United States, to:

- **Take 10% off Daily**
- **Take 10% off Standard Daily, Weekly, and Monthly Rates**
- **Take 5% or greater off Leisure Daily, Weekend, Weekly and Monthly Rates**

**We reserve the right to discontinue these and any other offers at any time.**

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In order to access this discount, you must obtain your own Hertz Membership Discount Card from the Trail Conference’s main office in Mahwah, NJ. call 201-512-9348 or email info@nynjtc.org.

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New Membership Benefit!
Reorganizing from the bottom up

Over the past six years Trail Conference staff has grown to support a variety of programs—trails, land acquisition, publications, advocacy, recruitment, volunteers, membership, and fundraising. As I mentioned in my January column, we are currently reorganizing our staff structure to put more people in the field as close as possible to the trails and volunteers that embody our mission.

The new arrangement is intended to more tightly focus our efforts on providing access to quality open space and to simplify the work of volunteers and agency partners. Initially, we will deploy a single point of contact in the field. Regional coordinators are the linchpin of the strategy. Initially we will deploy coordinators into three regions—New Jersey, New York East of the Hudson, and New York West of the Hudson.

These regional coordinators will support the Trail Conference volunteers in their regions and will, in turn, be supported by three staff specialists—in volunteer coordination, land acquisition, cartography, and communications—in our central office. This should allow us to better leverage the efforts and expertise of the hundreds of partners and thousands of volunteers we work with each year. Staff changes are now being made to accomplish this, including the following:

Larry Wheelock, longtime Trails Director, is now the West Hudson Regional Coordinator, and also will cover the East Hudson position until it is filled.

Brenda Holzinger, formerly Conservation & Advocacy Assistant Director is now New Jersey Regional Coordinator.

Leslie Rappaport, formerly Bear Mountain Project Manager, is now Membership & Development Program Manager.

Matthew Townsen has joined the staff as a Bear Mountain Project Manager. Matt started with the Trail Conference as an SCA (Student Conservation Association) intern in October 2006. He stayed on as a Trail Crew Supervisor to finish up the 2007 season at Bear Mountain before his recent promotion.

Catherine Gemmill, formerly Information Manager, is now Administration & Information Manager.

Carruth, formerly Administrative Assistant, is now Help Desk Administrator.

In addition to the East Hudson Field Coordinator, we are also hiring a Trail Construction Specialist to lead our major construction and training projects such as the one at Bear Mountain. For more details, see www.nynjtc.org.

Other changes:

• Neige West, who has edited the Trail Walker for seven years, is expanding her role as Trail Walker and e-Walker to take on web content, public relations, and advocacy as our Communications Specialist.

• Matt Rapp, formerly Membership & Volunteer Associate is now Volunteer Coordinator.

New Trail Conference Map Set Available by April

The Trail Conference is pleased to announce the publication of the eighth edition of our popular East Hudson Trails map set. This new, digitally-produced map features 20-foot contours and incorporates various enhancements from the previous edition, including several revisions to the trails. Of special note for GPS users, grid lines and projections are corrected from the previous edition. The set will be available at the beginning of April.

The cost of this map set is $10.95, with the members’ discounted price being $8.25. This eight-page color map set, see Hiker’s Marketplace on page 12, call 201-512-9348, ext. 11, visit www.nynjtc.org, or stop in at the Trail Conference office.

Three Trail Grants Support TC Projects in NY and NJ

The Trail Conference has received a $10,000 grant from the Marjorie Baier Foundation to support our Community Trail Program in the West Hudson Region. This grant will help us to expand our capacity to provide assistance to local trail groups in Rockland, Orange, Sullivan, Ulster, Greene, and Delaware Counties. Specific purposes of the grant include:

• completing a 63-acre land acquisition in Montrose on the northern border of Sterling Forest, which is visible from the Appalachian Trail. Along with Arrow Park and another proposed acquisition, this land would add more than 500 acres of contiguous open space to Sterling Forest State Park.

• in the Town of Warwick, developing a trail corridor that will link municipal, county, state, and federal open space (the AT) to several loop trails in the eastern Warwick-Greenwood Lake area.

• assisting New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation with the development of the Sterling Forest State Park Master Plan, including hiking connections between Greenwood Lake on the west and Blue Lake on the east.

• creating a permanently protected trail corridor in the Town of Chester for the Appalachian and Highlands Trails.

In January, the Greenway Conservancy for the Hudson River Valley announced a grant to the Trail Conference in the amount of $5,000. This money will help the costs of building a 28-foot timber bridge across a cliff face on Bear Mountain as part of the Appalachian Trail relocation project there.

In November, the New Jersey Dept. of Environmental Protection announced the award of $25,000 to the Trail Conference for its Highlands Trail project in central New Jersey. This project was one of 48 trail projects recommended for funding by the New Jersey Trails Council and funded by the Federal Highway Administration’s Recreational Trails Program.

Membership & Development; Bill O’Hearn, Conservation; Gary Willick, Fulfillment Coordinator; Jeremy Miller, Cartographer; Hedy Abad, Membership & Volunteer Associate; and Kathy Goldman, Office Assistant. These staff and office resources are in place for you, our volunteers. Trail Conference volunteer efforts, originally shouldered entirely by member clubs, are now largely dispersed among thousands of individual members, from central New Jersey to north of the Catskills.

Our new structure will make these resources more easily accessible for you. Together, we will continue to protect and preserve for public access the 1,683 miles (and growing) of hiking trails and trail lands in our rapidly developing region. We will extend our 88-year success story of connecting people with nature.

— Ed Goodell, goodell@nynjtc.org

For Extra Credit...

While working on the Stillman Bridge project at Storm King and on picnic tables on the AT, Andrew Steeever experienced first-hand one of the logistical difficulties volunteers face: carrying material—particularly heavy, awkward pieces of lumber to work sites, sometimes long distances over rough terrain.

He set himself the goal of devising an aid that would relieve the bodily stress of hand-carrying. “I came up with a simple design of a metal hook and strap on a belt that allows people to carry material on the hip, rather than by hand. I made a couple of prototypes. It needs some more testing,” Andrew is looking into the possibility of patenting and manufacturing his design. “I’m not taking orders yet,” he says.

A prototype of Andrew’s load-carrying belt.

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A prototype of Andrew’s load-carrying belt.
You have probably heard the standard argument going around these days:Sink into property taxes, requiring—local taxes = no money available for such things as public acquisition of open space. In fact, two counties in New Jersey recently proposed cutting their collection of open space funds, citing recession worries. As someone who buys open space for a living, I'm here to tell you that this conventional wisdom is wrong-headed. Now is the time for communities to get more for their open-space dollar.

First off, consider basic economics and the rapid loss of open space. When the market is dropping, when owners are panicking and looking to downsize and sell sooner rather than later, is now the absolute best time to buy. As the real estate values continue to slide, we will find willing sellers (including the big developers like Toll Brothers and Pulte) of sites that seemed like a lock for development only last year. This means that we have a two- to three-year window before the market correction runs its course.

Secondly, we are using public money general by county and municipal residents who have been willing to tax themselves for this purpose. The reason we have separated public open space funds is so that local officials cannot tap those funds to cover short-term govern- ments, the public has made a long-term investment in open space funding, and now is the time to use those funds to their fullest. And don’t forget that local towns are able to use their modest open space dollars to leverage con- siderable local, state, and federal funds to preserve property for a fraction of the total selling price.

There is the issue of fairness to property owners whose right to develop their land has been restricted by government for reasons of public interest and who may decide they no longer want to pay property taxes and other carrying costs of their land.

Potential buyers may be limited to land trusts, and in New Jersey, the Green Acres program. To remove publicly-funded buy- ers from the market is going to leave many of these owners stranded and may make the real estate inventory situation worse than it already is. Conversely, to a community open space is a low-cost use of land, requiring little if anything in the way of services. It is essential for sustainable communities. Parklands add to property values, stabi- lizes taxes, provides passive and active recreation, protects our water quality and quantity, can generate ecotonous rev- enues, and maintains our small town semi-rural character and quality of life.

That’s a good deal, and it’s why open space programs have been so popular during the voting season and state funds are not failing to attract public dollars to their fullest, and avoid missing what may be our last opportuni- ty to purchase some of these priceless open spaces and preserve them for future generations, long after the current eco- nomic crisis has run its course.

During the past decade, the Garden State Preservation Trust Fund has made it possible to preserve land in New Jersey at a rate of about 2 acres per day. With the state being land to development, voters approved a one-year, $200 million, stop-gap addition to the fund last November, but this money will be exhausted next year without new funds.

The Keep It Green Campaign, an alliance of nearly 100 groups statewide, including the Trail Conference, kicked off its 2008 campaign in support of the Garden State Preservation Trust Fund and would add 5-cent deposits to plastic bottles for renewing the trust fund, while at the same time enjoying a quick break amidst a hectic day in the state capital.

The Keep It Green Campaign is currently investigating open space funding mechanisms in other states to choose the best approach for New Jersey. Funding possibilities include: a water use fee, a dedicated portion of the gas tax, a tax on sewer service, system fees ("trash" tax), a real estate transfer fee, a building material tax, state park and forest use fees, unclaimed lottery win- nings, a sporting goods tax, and a returnable bottle fee.

If you would like to join the Keep It Green Campaign and the Trail Conference to fight for open space conservation in 2008, please contact Brenda Holzinger, NJ Field Coordinator, via email (holzinger@nynjtc.org) or telephone (201-512-9348, ext. 25).

Off-Road Vehicle Legislation Reintroduced

The New Jersey ORV bill (Assembly-4172 and Senate-3024 was introduced and voted out of the Assembly Transportation & Public Works on December 6, 2007 and reintroduced in the Senate, but it was not passed during the lame duck session. The bill, with some new amendments, has been introduced in the Assembly (A-823) and will be brought forward in the next few weeks in the Senate. The Trail Conference testi- fied at the December 6 committee meeting, a stakeholders meeting sponsored by Assemblyman Reed Gusciora, and at this Assem- bly press conference held with our partners, Pinelands Preservation Alliance and New Jersey Conservation Foundation. Watch your email for updates as this legislation moves forward.

New York

Byron Hill (formerly Pierson Lakes), Phases II and III

This proposed 95-unit development, located on 200 acres at the intersection of four major parks—Sterling Forest and Harriman State Parks in New York, and Ringwood Manor State Park and Ramapo Reservation in New Jersey—was the result of a primerail trail corridor linking the two states and break an eight and a half-mile-long corridor of unfragmented forest only 29 miles from New York City. In addition, Connecticut Governor M. J.Dannel Malloy established the plan, which includes an Amended Findings Statement. Executive Director Ed Goodall testified at the First Plaftong Board hearing in November, and CoChair Director Bill O’Hearn testified and submitted Trail Confer- ence maps on a second hearing held January 22.

LaFarge Cleanup Is a Green Success!

There is more good news from the clean-up of Trail Conference preserved property in the Shawangunks known as LaFarge (see cover story of January/February 2008 issue). LaFarge North America, the previous owner, has agreed to take away for free the four tons of trash that had been dumped on the property. Trail Conference volunteers collected the tires, along with other trash, over two weekends of clean-up at the site last fall. LaFarge is going to take these tires to a cement plant in Pennsylvania that generates part of its energy by burning tires. "But even more exciting," says Brenda Holzinger, who, as former assistant direc- tor of conservation and advocacy (now NJ Field Coordinator) organized the cleanup effort, "is the fact that only 5% of the 20 tons of trash will end up as trash in a landfill. The other 95% is all getting recycled and/or reused. Taylor Recycling, which got the other 16 tons of trash we picked up, recycled 95% of every- thing they take in. They are actually a global leader in this trash recycling technology." She noted thanks to all the volunteer efforts, the Trail Conference will have spent just $500 to clean up the 150-acre site in preparation for sale to New York State.

Funding in Works for NYS Parks

Governor Spitzer’s budget proposal for 2008 provides $110 mil- lion for capital improvements to state parks facilities, Dept. of Environmental Conservation campgrounds along with improvements to state fair facilities, and transformation of an old railroad bridge over the Hudson River between Poughkeepsie and into a walking and biking trail. In addition, Spitzer has re-upped his popular Better Bottle Bill. This makes New York City’s tumultuous enclosed nickel deposit for the Environmental Protec- tion Fund and would add 5-cent deposits to plastic bottles for recycling. These changes, as well as other initiatives, do not currently part of the deposit system. Anyone interested in keeping up with developments on these proposals as the budget debate continues on page 11.
TRAIL U
Teaching Practical Skills to Trails Volunteers at Locations Throughout the NY-NJ Area

Spring Workshops

Details about listed workshops can be found in Trail U Workshop Catalog (page 4). For information or to register for a workshop, go to www.nynjtc.org and click on “Workshops” in left-hand column or contact volunteers@nynjtc.org or call 201-512-9348, ext. 26.

Additional workshops may be added at our Bear Mountain Trails Project (BMTP) by group request or popular demand. Contact Matt Townsend, BMTP manager, at towsend@mtnjtc.org or 201-512-9348.

March 29 (Saturday)
#332: Bear Mountain Overview and Orientation
Coordinator: Matt Townsend
Location: Bear Mountain State Park
March 30 (Sunday)
#337: AT Lands Monitor Training Workshop
Coordinator: Matt Townsend
Phone: 845-404-4036 or Jim Haggert, 845-462-2893 for more information.
Sign up is as above.
Location: 4IR Shelter or AT in Dutchess County, NY (just off the Taconic Parkway)
April 5 & 6 (Saturday & Sunday)
#326: Trail Layout and Design
Coordinator: Estelle Anderson and Bob Jonas
Location: RPH Shelter on AT in Dutchess County, NY (fieldwork)
Fahnestock State Park, NY (classroom), and Wonder Lake State Park, NY (fieldwork)
April 12 (Saturday)
#327: Trail Maintenance 101
Coordinator: Gary Hau gland
Location: Fahnestock State Park, NY (classroom), and Wonder Lake State Park, NY (fieldwork)
April 12 (Saturday)
#334: Stone Splitting
Coordinator: Matt Townsend
Instructor: TBD
Location: Fahnestock State Park, NY
April 13 (Sunday)
#323: Trail Construction and Restoration
Coordinator: Gary Hau gland
Location: Fahnestock State Park, NY (classroom), and Wonder Lake State Park, NY (fieldwork)
April 19 & 20 (Saturday & Sunday)
#329: Stone Step Construction for Novice Trail Builder
Coordinator: Matt Townsend
Instructor: Eddie Walsh
Location: Bear Mountain State Park
April 26 (Saturday)
#331: Trail Maintenance 101
Coordinator: Ellen Cronan
Registration deadline: April 18
Location: Bear Mountain State Park
May 3 & 4 (Saturday & Sunday)
#332: Basic Stone Cribbing (May 3)
#334: Basic Stone Cribbing (May 4)
Coordinator: Matt Townsend
Instructor: TBD
Location: Bear Mountain State Park
May 17 & 18 (Saturday & Sunday)
#337: Stone Paving (May 17)
#338: Stone Paving (May 18)
Coordinator: Matt Townsend
Instructor: TBD
Location: Bear Mountain State Park

New This Year!
Two Dates & Two Locations (NY & NJ) for Our Most Popular Trail U Workshop – Trail Maintenance 101

Check the Trail U schedule on this page for details on these workshops and others that meet your needs and skill levels!

All Trail Conference Workshops, regardless of location, will be listed under Trail U.

TRAIL U Schedules

March – April 2008

For the latest schedules and additional details, go to nynjtc.org and click on “Trail Crew/Work trips.” TBD = To Be Determined

For all trips bring work gloves, water, lunch, insect repellent. In some cases, tools are provided. Contact leaders in advance for meeting times and places. Volunteers must become members of the Conference to participate in these projects. A one-time “guest” participation is allowed, so bring your friends.

NORTH JERSEY WEEKEND CREW
Leader: Sandy Paris, 732-469-5109
Second Sunday of each month
Trips start at 9:30 am; call for location and details during the week before the scheduled trip day. Tackle a variety of projects ranging from trail repair to bridge building in northern New Jersey.

NORTH JERSEY WEEKDAY CREW
Leader: John Mitchell, mtmtrails@verizon.net
This crew covers the NJ/Pennsylvania, Pineland S. P., Harvin Green S. E., and NJ Palisades area. Its purpose is to respond quickly to immediate needs, rather than to schedule definite events in advance. If you’re interested in being on call for this work, contact John Morin by email.

WEST JERSEY CREW
Leaders: Monica and David Day
Phone: 732-937-9058 Cell: 908-307-5249
Email: westjerseycrew@trailbuilders.org
Website: www.trailbuilders.com
Beginners are welcomed on all work trips. All events begin at 9:00 am. Please phone the leaders for meeting location and driving directions.
There is usually a walk to the work site, so please be there on time (call the leaders’ cell phone if you are coming to a meet and are running late). Rain cancels – if in doubt, call the leaders between 6:00 and 6:30 that morning.

April 12 (Saturday)
Warren Trail, Jenny Jump State Park
We will continue work on this new trail.

April 26 (Saturday)
Douglas Trail, Worthington State Forest
We will build water management structures (water bars and check dams).

CENTRAL JERSEY TRAIL PROJECT
Contact: Ellen Cronan, econran1@yahoo.com
April 27 (Sunday)
Newark Watershed, West Milford, NJ
Work trip starts at 9 am and will last all day.
Contact Ellen Cronan for more information.

HIGHLANDS TRAIL CREW
Leader: Glenn Oleksak, glennolx@juno.com
We meet on the first or second Sunday of each month, with additional trips sometimes scheduled. We tackle a variety of Highlands Trail projects from trail maintenance to trail building. Most upcoming trips will be in Hunterdon County, NJ. For details on trips, go to www.nynjtc.org and click on “Trail Crew/Work trips” at left. Please contact leader if you are coming on a trip so that you can be notified of cancellations.

METHRO TRAIL CREW
Leader: Joe Gindoff, 718-614-2209 joejindoff1@aim.com
March 15 (Saturday)
Pelham Bay Park, Haver Island
Meet them at the SW Corner Orchard parking lot and stone waterbars and check dams.
April 12 (Saturday)
State Island Greenbelt
Meet them at the Nature Center, 200 Nevada Trail Maintenance in various sections of the park. Beginners are welcomed with basic trail maintenance as our focus.
May 17 (Saturday)
Pelham Bay Park
Contact: Liz Gonzalez, 646-319-3159
Meet 10 am at the canoe launch next to the Orchard Beach Parking Lot. Canoe Cleanup.
May 18 (Sunday)
Alley Park, Queens
Meet them at the corner of 238 St. and 67 Ave. Trail maintenance / Waterbar construction
June 6, 7 & 8 (Fri. Sat. & Sun.)
National Trails Day, Eagle Scout Projects
Alley Park, Queens
Meet them at the upper parking lot, across from the Sanitation Department, off Winchester Blvd.
Join us in building two bridges (17’ and 30’) long.
June 21 (Saturday)
Van Cortlandt Park, John Muir Trail
Meet them at the riding stable parking lot. Trail maintenance

EAST HUDDSON CREW
Work dates to be announced on website. Sign up for email notification at www.nynjtc.org; click on “Trail Crew/Work Trips” then Sign-up for Trail Crew at top of page.

WEST HUDSON SOUTH CREW
Leaders: Chris Ezzo ('Crew Chief'; 516-431-1148, mazzu@nynjtc.org)
Brian Buckendler: 718-219-7661, brian@grantravolution.com
Claudia Gardner: 212-632-1324, cgantor@earthlink.net
Robert Marshall: 914-737-4792, rmmarshall@verizon.net
March 19 (Saturday)
Popolopen Gorge Trail
Leader: Chris Ezzo
April 24 (Thursday)
Popolopen Gorge Trail
Leader: Bob Marshall
April 26 (Saturday)
Popolopen Gorge Trail
Leader: Chris Ezzo
May 8 (Thursday)
Popolopen Gorge Trail
Leader: Bob Marshall

NEW JERSEY APPALACHIAN TRAIL FIELD CREW
Leader: Gene Sanclemente, trailwork@apascentral-nj.org

Second Saturday of Each Month, April through November
Work begins at 9 am and is finished before 4 pm. Covers the entire NJ section of the AT, blue-blazed trail, and shelters. Supplies work by our individual maintainers as requested and for special work projects. Workers bring lunches, water, and tools: all equipment and training provided. Email leader to be placed on email notification list.

BEAR MOUNTAIN TRAILS PROJECT
Project Manager: Matt Townsend, towsend@nynjtc.org or 201-512-9438
For info and to register: volunteers@nynjtc.org, or call 201-512-9438, ext. 17
Second Saturday of Each Month
Beginner work trips.

Weekly Work Trips
Scheduled Thursday through Monday (including on weekends that have workshops)

Save the Date
Jenn 7 (Saturday), National Trails Day
Work trip at Bear Mountain
Volunteers Needed to Complete Trail Structures Guidebook
The content of this guidebook ultimately relies on the input and expertise of the crew leaders, maintainers, and volunteers in the field. Anyone who is willing to devote some time and/or knowledge is urged to participate. You can help by providing notes and photos of past projects, research materials, codes and resources, or take on a trail structure and get directly involved in the creation of a set of plans and instructions. You can also attend a seminar on using SketchUp, a free, simple-to-use 3D software tool, and learn to build a trail structure virtually from which you can provide illustrated instructions for others.

AT Lands Monitors Needed; Training Scheduled for March 30
Anyone with an adventurous spirit, a love of getting off-trail, and a strong land conservation ethic is encouraged to sign up for training to become a volunteer AT corridor monitor and to experience ‘Life on the Edge’ firsthand. AT monitors are needed to monitor and to experience ‘Life on the Edge’ firsthand. AT monitors are needed to monitor and to experience ‘Life on the Edge’ firsthand. At monitors are needed to monitor and to experience ‘Life on the Edge’ firsthand. At monitors are needed to monitor and to experience ‘Life on the Edge’ firsthand. At monitors are needed to monitor and to experience ‘Life on the Edge’ firsthand. At monitors are needed to monitor and to experience ‘Life on the Edge’ firsthand. At monitors are needed to monitor and to experience ‘Life on the Edge’ firsthand. At monitors are needed to monitor and to experience ‘Life on the Edge’ firsthand. At monitors are needed to monitor and to experience ‘Life on the Edge’ firsthand. At monitors are needed to monitor and to experience ‘Life on the Edge’ firsthand. At monitors are needed to monitor and to experience ‘Life on the Edge’ firsthand. At monitors are needed to monitor and to experience ‘Life on the Edge’ firsthand. At monitors are needed to monitor and to experience ‘Life on the Edge’ firsthand.

Like to Look at Photographs?
Have we got a job for you! The Trail Conference has tons of digital photos that need to be looked at and tagged for easy retrieval for use online and in publications. The job will involve the use of a photo editing software.

Join the Friends of Darlington Schoolhouse
The Friends of the Darlington Schoolhouse seek volunteers to help in the following areas:

* Technology: A volunteer to help digitize the Darlington archives and maintain the website.

* General: Volunteers to join the committee and help direct the future of the schoolhouse.

If interested, please contact Chris Tauch at info@darlingtonschoolhouse.org for more information.

Talk to New Jersey
Help spread the word about the Trail Conference in New Jersey and enjoy some interesting events. Support TC state field coordinator Brenda Holzinger by staffing our information table at events in New Jersey during April, May, and June.

Catskill Trailkeeper Project Manager
The Trail Conference seeks a project manager for a new Catskill Trailkeeper program. Work in partnership with Catskill Mountainkeeper to develop this stewardship and education program for trails in Catskills.

Contact volunteer@nynjtc.org or 201-512-9548, ext. 26, to indicate your interest or get more information about these or other volunteer opportunities.

Thank-You! from Camp Vacamas
We did it! Thanks to the many generous donations from Trail Conference members and friends, we have exceeded our goal of 25 day packs and 25 back packs for teenagers so that they can do hiking trips out of Camp Vacamas in West Milford, N.J. Michael Friedman, executive director of the camp, said, “We are absolutely delighted with the donations from the Trail Conference. The quality of the packs was amazing, and we got cross-country skies, boots, and so much gear that we never even asked for! Please pass on our thanks, and come join us on the Hewitt-Butler Trail next summer!”

Inique Harris models one of 25 day packs (and 25 back packs) donated to Camp Vacamas for its teen program by Trail Conference members.
Science & Ecology

Clubmoss: The Diminutive Giant
By Denise Hewitt

“What is a weed? A plant whose virtues have not yet been discovered.” — Ralph Waldo Emerson

In the Northeast we are blessed with an abundance of trees—trees that shade and protect the trail, provide essential habitat for wildlife, and make our hikes that much more enjoyable with their colorful leaves, flowers, and fresh scents. But there is an innocuous little “tree” that can be found in moss, shaded areas along the trail that you may never have noticed before because it does not flower or grow over a few inches tall, and it can be somewhat rare. Reminiscent of conifers from a magical forest, many look like “tiny pine trees” with light brown club-shaped “cones” growing vertically upwards from the ends of stems. But this humble little plant is not a tree at all but clubmoss, and our small friend has a big story to tell.

Clubmosses belong to the genus Lycopodium, and all members within this genus are called Lycophytes. Lycophytes are among the oldest living land plants on earth, dating back about 300 million years. They are preceded in evolutionary time only by algae, mosses, and fungi, and are the ancestors of all vascular plants, which includes, well... almost all the land plants we know today. Clubmosses were not always small or rare. Ancient clubmoss trees grew to be about 100 feet tall and dominated the earth’s landscape for over 40 million years. With major extinction events these grandiose trees were buried and fossilized. They accumulated within the Earth’s surface, slowly becoming converted into much of the coal we use today. You might say we have fossilized Lycophytes to thank for many of our modern creature comforts.

Clubmosses are also fascinating because they have male and female reproductive cells. Male spores are flagellated (comparable to human sperm), which means they have a long tail that propels them through water towards the female egg. (This occurs inside those vertical yellow cones). The fact that some Lycophytes require 6 to 15 years to reach reproductive maturity may explain why many species are rare or endangered in some states.

If you come across a Lycophyte on a hike, you might try to identify it to determine if it is endangered or threatened. Because some of them are so rare, don’t disturb it by taking a cutting or attempting to transplant it—they don’t transplant well at all. Better to take a picture and compare it with information on the USDA plant database website [http://plants.usda.gov/]. You can also contact your state office of environmental protection for further information.

If you think about it, all animals depend on plant life, so from an evolutionary perspective we owe these ancient majestic wonders a lot of respect, and perhaps a little helping hand.

Denise Hewitt is a student in the Graduate Program in Ecology and Evolution at Rutgers University

Spring Is Coming. Time to Have Fun on the Trail!

This is the season to get back outside and connect with nature. Sign up for a trails workshop (page 5), join a crew (page 5), or adopt a trail (page 6). You’ll find good company, satisfying work, and enjoy a good day on the trail!

The actual field work will occur during the months of June and July, when teams of two will be asked to hike a two-mile trail segment while recording the invasive species and documenting the location with the GPS device. Volunteers will be trained in plant identification as well as the survey protocol, which basically consists of stopping at survey points along the trail, scanning the woods and noting the presence, identity, and density of any invasive species seen.

This will be the third and last year of this three-year project, supported by the USDA (US Dept. of Agriculture), which aims to better understand the spread of invasive plants in forested parklands that have high conservation value and high levels of public use.

There is very little information about this in our region, which makes it difficult for park managers to determine the magnitude of the problem or how to manage it. Using volunteer “citizen scientists” to collect field data for scientific research is itself an explicit part of the research program. The results will indicate whether “citizen scientists” (ie, hikers) collect accurate data regarding invasive plants.

The training portion of this project will begin in late May/early June (dates to be announced soon), so sign up now to ensure your place. Contact Hedy Abad at 201-512-9348, ext. 17 or volunteers@nyjtc.org.

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Tracking the Wild Invasives – Year Three

The Trail Conference and Rutgers University are looking for at least 50 hikers and naturalists who are interested in helping to identify common invasive species in state park lands and track the occurrences using GPS units. Volunteers will be trained in plant identification as well as the survey protocol, which basically consists of stopping at survey points along the trail, scanning the woods and noting the presence, identity, and density of any invasive species seen.

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March

March 1

ADK-MH. Trail Maintenance, NJ. Leader: To prescreen call Trail Maintenance Leader: 973-739-5383, meet at 9am, work until 3pm. Bring water, work gloves, bag, hat and refreshments - you have earned them. No experience needed. First aid to the aids. May 6th,9th,13th,16th - working new people and older outdoors. Snow cleared, ground covered in foliage, seeds, bugs, scorpions and snakes.

March 2

UOC. Delaware-Marlton Canal, from Kingston to Princeton, NJ. Leader: George Pitcher, 732-828-1890. Meet: 10am at Kingston train station; call leader for alternate meeting time. Easy 3-4 miles at leisurely pace; for experienced winter hikers only. Inclement weather date is following Monday. 4-5 hours. Inclement weather date is following Monday. 4-5 hours.

March 3

NYHC. New York Hiking Club. Leader: Eric Singer, 845-269-8028; call before 10pm. Meet: 8:45am at Penn Station, NY, call for directions. Easy 4-5 miles; see Trail Conference map #97. Covered bridge walk on a trail, straight and level in a park. Easy for beginners, old folks and kids.

March 4

Sponsored by Member Clubs


March 5


March 6

NYHC. High Mountain Preserve, NY. Leader: Eric Singer, 845-269-8028; call before 10pm. Meet: 8:45am at Penn Station, NY, call for directions. Easy 4-5 miles; see Trail Conference map #97. Covered bridge walk on a trail, straight and level in a park. Easy for beginners, old folks and kids.

March 7

April

Catamount Mountain Club

A Catskill Mountain Club work crew takes a break on Twin Mountain while cleaning trails after last April’s ice storm. AMERICAN HIKING SOCIETY

March/April 2008

Member Club Profile

The Trail Conference comprises 10,000 individual members and more than 100 member clubs with a combined membership of 150,000 hikers. We invite club representatives to submit photos from hikes or maintenance outings or other events (please set your digital camera for highest resolution). Email your photos, along with complete caption information to: tw@tnynjtc.org or “T1 Club photo in the subject line.”

A Catskill Mountain Club outing takes in the Catskill Mountains near New York City. American Hiking Society

We Can Publicize Your Events!

This year’s theme, “Join Us on the Trail,” is an open invitation to all Americans to get outside and connect with local hiking clubs and parks and open spaces of all kinds.

Clubs: Plan your events now and publicize them in the May/June issue of Trail Walker by sending details to tw@tnynjtc.org by March 20.

This group, stopped at Twin Pond, joined a Larkin the Park outing, part of an annual celebration of the Catskill Mountain Club that helps to organize.

The Catskill Mountain Club is a "grassroots association of outdoors-people that promotes safe, responsible outdoors use and seeks to publicize awareness and appreciation of our natural and human recreational resources." Its interest is in the entire Catskill region, not just the Catskill Park or the high peaks. Club members have worked on an annual spring Cleanup that promotes safe hiking and responsible trail use. In 2008, the club will also undertake a repeat of its successful Spring Cleanup program.

The Catskill Mountain Club (CMC) was founded in 1900 by Chris Olney and friends. The CMC's original purpose was to reopen Catskill trails devastated by a man-made 1913 fire and to promote the planting of new trees along old trails. The club also undertook other projects, such as cleaning up litter along the Catskill Mountains and the Catskill Park.

At that time, the club was called "Catamount Mountain Club," and itsobjective was to promote responsible outdoor recreation in the Catskill Mountains. The club had a small membership and operated on a shoestring budget. However, the club quickly gained popularity and grew in numbers. By the early 1920s, the club had more than 1,000 members and was able to embark on a series of more ambitious projects.

In the late 1920s, the club began to focus more on trail maintenance and preservation. This led to the establishment of the Catskill Mountain Club's Trail Conference in 1929. The Trail Conference is a network of more than 1,000 individual members and more than 100 local hiking clubs with a combined membership of one million hikers. The Trail Conference organizes numerous trail maintenance and preservation events throughout the year, including the annual Spring Cleanup.

The Trail Conference is dedicated to promoting safe, responsible outdoor recreation in the Catskill Mountains and beyond. The group aims to involve more of its members as hiking and trail maintenance volunteers. The Trail Conference hosts numerous events and programs, including trail cleanups, nature hikes, and seminars on outdoor recreation.

The Trail Conference is also dedicated to publicizing the work it does and its accomplishments to the public. The group publishes a monthly newsletter and a quarterly magazine, both of which feature articles, photos, and personal stories from club members and other outdoor enthusiasts. The Trail Conference also maintains a website (www.twnynjtc.org) that provides information on hiking trails, events, and other outdoor activities in the Catskill Mountains and beyond.

The Trail Conference is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, and all contributions are tax-deductible. The group is funded by membership dues, donations, and other contributions. The Trail Conference is a member of the Alliance for the Arts, which is the national organization of hiking and outdoor recreation clubs and organizations.
Leaves a Legacy

You can join the special individuals whose legacies ensure the Trail Conference will continue to connect people with the land. You can help determine the future of the Trail Conference by coming to put the Trail Conference in your will. It’s easy to do and won’t affect your current cash flow.

By naming the Trail Conference as a beneficiary of your estate, you will help secure our future. Your gift is private and not made public until you decide to do so (you can request that your gift remain anonymous) and can be designated for a specific program or be an unrestricted gift. You can choose to donate a specific sum from your estate, for example $10,000, or you may allocate a percentage of your estate.

Please contact Development Director Joshua Howard for background information or to arrange a visit with an accountant or lawyer for professional assistance.

West Hudson South Crew 2007 Report

2007 was another good year for the West Hudson South trail crew. Consistently good weather helped us finish several big trail projects. The spring season saw us rebuilding a portion of the AT on West Mountain. We split the second phase on two projects, both in Bear Mountain-Harriman State Park. There was a large erosion control job on the Trail and many trail improvements required on the Ramapo-Dunderberg Trail on Black Mountain. In all, we put in over more than 1,100 hours of serious labor to upgrade those trails.

Thanks to the following people who put in the time to come out and help: Collin Baja, Kristen Baja, Robert Blanchette, Roland Brouch, Gail Brown, Jim Brown, Brian Buckel, Chris Connolly, David Davis, Monique Day, Chris Ezzo, Robert Fowles, Joyce Gallagher, Claudia Ganz, Mary Hill, Chris Ives, Bill Horowitz, Joan James, Frank Keesch, Andrea Kellner, David Kellner, Richard Lynch, John Mack, Macie Macked, Bob Marshall, Lori Massik, Gary Mayer, Trishy Pope, Kevin Rone, Charles Siver-Frankel, Trudy Schneider, Bruce Shriver, Brunnen Wysong, and Steve Zubariah.

—Chris Ezzo, Crew Chief

Quilt maker and Trail Conference member Carolyn Caswell had a new wall hanging for the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference offices at the Davenport Schoolhouse. To accomplish this project, she will need a collection of new or nearly new T-shirts appropriate to Trail Conference activities. To help, you can donate a shirt. The size of the wall hanging will depend upon the space available at the schoolhouse and the number of usable donated T-shirts. Please become part of Trail Conference history, drop off your T-shirt donation at the Trail Conference office before April 1, 2008. Donated T-shirts will not be returned.

Contribute Your Club, Trail Project T-Shirt to TC

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Please contact Development Director Joshua Howard for background information or to arrange a visit with an accountant or lawyer for professional assistance.
TRAIL U COURSE CATALOG
continued from page 4
USFS Chainsaw Safety Certification
This two-day course, held at a US Forest Service campus, is designed to teach how to safely use a chainsaw. It includes maintenance of the saw, identification and mitigation of hazards, as well as plenty of field practice using chainsaws. Attendance priority is given to individuals volunteering on NFS lands (i.e. Appalachian Trail and Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area). Students do not need to own a chainsaw to attend, but if you have one, please feel free to bring it.

Trail Land Boundary Monitoring Certification
This one-day workshop provides participants with first-hand experience, checking land boundaries and trail corridor required for the project. Trail land encroachment and other common problems. The “in-the-field” portion of this workshop will be spent off-trail; therefore students should feel comfortable with off-trail hiking situations.

Water Control Conceptual Workshop
A presentation workshop dealing only with various watersheds and other structures to keep water off of trails.

Basic Rock Wall Training
Topics covered include mechanical advantage, simple tools for moving large rocks, safety considerations, proper body mechanics, and methods of reducing natural resource impacts.

Rigging for Trail Work
Topics covered over two days include: safety issues; equipment selection, care, and application; calculating for safety and efficiency, mechanical advantage for pulling; and overhead zip and high-lines. There will be plenty of opportunity for hands-on practice on Sunday plus a winching-cleaning clinic in the afternoon. Preference in registration will be given to participants attending both days.

Stone Splitting and Shaping Workshop
Topics covered include: Proper use of tools to split and shape (dress) stone to desired dimensions, selecting stone, cutting electric hammer drill, hand star drills and single jack hammer, top quality carbide blade chisels, stone hammers, hand tools, tracers, and riving hammers.

Stone Cribbing Level I
This workshop will cover the basics of building dry stone retaining walls to support a road way and retain a hillside. Class size will be kept very small to insure optimal education.

Stone Step Construction
This workshop will focus on rock step construction. Topics covered include: building steps and cribbing walls. Registration is limited to females.

Stone Pinning Workshop
Techniques will be taught to build and anchor trail over exposed sloping bedrock surfaces using steel pins. Topics covered include: safety issues, use of mechanized and hand power rock drills, pin / steel selection, different methods of affixing and sealing pins into bedrock, and building off of the set pins.

Women’s Weekend
Focus will be on rock moving and stone construction. Topics covered include: mechanical advantage, simple tools for moving large rocks, safety considerations, proper body mechanics, and methods of reducing natural resource impacts. We will be constructing some steps and cribbing walls. Registration is limited to females.

CONSERVATION & ADVOCACY
continued from page 4
process can sign up to receive news alerts from the Trail Conference. Make sure we have your current email address.

TC Testifies on Belleayre Project
Staff member Brenda Holzinger represented the Trail Conference at the December 16, 2008, hearing on the Belleayre resort project in the Catskills. The meeting was held by the NYSDOE, of Environmental Conservation to determine the scope of the supplemental environmental impact statement (SEIS) for the project. The Conference testimony focused on the potential impact the development would have on trail viewshed. The Trail Conference also submitted written comments that included a viewshed map of the region, which indicated the many trails potentially impacted by the planned development.

Finally, the Trail Conference is collecting information about potential viewshed impacts from trail users who are out hiking these trails and documenting their experience. If you would like to assist with this effort, please contact Brenda Holzinger via email (holzingerb@nyserc.org) or phone (201-512-9348, ext. 25).

N.W. Norton & Co., 2007
Reviewed by Georgette Weir

The subtitle of Stephen Gorman’s Winter Camping Handbook is actually a better indication of the book’s contents. Wilderness Travel & Adventure in the Cold-Winter Months. Camping considerations comprise big chunks of the content, but there is at least as much about traveling on snow and ice as about staying in place in a campsite.

He presents basic information about proper clothes for cold-weather recreation, skiing and riding (snowboarding, that is) equipment for backcountry, snowshoeing, and crampons. There is a chapter about navigating in the backcountry, the details of which will be familiar to anyone skilled in backcountry hiking in any season, food, nutrition, and traveling in groups.

Gorman’s is a good basic introduction to the subject of winter outdoor recreation and he offers many specific tips. About choosing a sleeping bag, for example, he discusses qualities of fill, shape, size, and temperature ratings. He emphasizes the importance of taking into account the body’s emissions of H2O—as much as a pint a night even while we sleep in the cold.

Gorman is definitely a winter enthusiast. Check out this guide if you’re looking for an introduction to the subject and, like him, you want to get out and “explore the winter wilderness and experience the joys of winter.” Winter Camping Handbook is a new, updated edition of Gorman’s 1991 Winter Hiking Guide. It is published by the Appalachian Mountain Club.

You will likely have to travel beyond the New York-New Jersey region to try out some of the construction projects suggested by Norbert Yankielun in How To Build an Igloo and Other Snow Shelters. Yankielun is a research engineer for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Cold Regions Laboratory in New Hampshire. He also conducts igloo-building workshops which, according to his bio, “draw hundreds.”

Step-by-step instructions are augmented by useful, clear drawings by Amelia Bauer. For each structure (igloos, quinzees, slab shelters, drift caves, spruce traps, and “expedient” shelters) Yankielun discusses their advantages, simple tools for moving large rocks, safety considerations, mechanical advantage and leverage, to set rock steps and cribbing walls.

Registration is limited to females.

SAVE THE DATE
Trail Conference Fundraiser
Banff Mountain Film Festival World Tour
This traveling exhibition from the 22nd annual Banff Mountain Film Festival brings you the world’s best mountain films. Experience the adventure of climbing, mountain expeditions, remote cultures, and the world’s last great wild places—all brought to life on the big screen.

New York, NY Event
Wednesday, March 5, 2008 - 7:30 PM
At Peter Norton Symphony Space 2537 Broadway at 95th Street, NY, NY
For additional info, film list, and directions visit www.chestnutmtnproductions.com

Sponsored by: Paragon Sporting Goods

Book Review
The Winter Camping Handbook
By Stephen Gorman
The Countryman Press, 2007
How to Build an Igloo And Other Snow Shelters
By Norbert E. Yankielun

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Registration is limited to females.

By Jeffrey & Donna Case

The Adirondack Mountain Club (ADK) has just published the 4th edition of its Guide to Adirondack Trails: Northville-Placid Trail, number four in its Foundation Preserve Series of eight guides to hiking in the Adirondack Park. The book is in the light, small easily carried format typical of the series and is addressed to experienced hikers interested in enjoying something more than a day hike.

The Northville-Placid (N-P) Trail is a 132-mile generally lowland trunk-line footpath through the heart of the Adirondacks. Begun in 1922 and completed in 1924, N-P Trail was the first trail project undertaken by the then newly formed ADK. It climbs no peaks; its highest point is just over 3,000 feet. The editors write, “when you hike the N-P Trail, you’re all in one shot or piecemeal, you’re walking across much of the Adirondacks . . . You really are crossing a cross-section of all it has to offer.” Directions for spur trails to near-by peaks and scenic views are included.

Editors Jeffrey and Donna Case have completed a thru-hike of the N-P Trail every year for the past 21 years. They provide expert advice on hiking gear, trip planning, seasonal hiking conditions, Dept. of Environmental Conservation rules and regulations, access to trailheads, and safety and emergency procedures. The trip planning sections are particularly full and useful, offering suggestions for both thru-hikers and section hikers. The introduction contains general planning advice, and the section descriptions have suggestions for shorter stretches of the trail. While the trail is not particularly steep, there are many streams and wetlands to cross, and the suggestions for appropriate clothing and equipment should be taken seriously.

The book has useful photographs, page maps, and an appendix of more than 100 USGS topo-based trail maps showing the entire hike. This publication is essential reading for any hiker or planner who will be walking the Trail and should be at the top of the list of gear to be carried in the pack.
This trail takes you to the Floating Trail, which gives a great view of the lake.

The Ravine Trail is reserved for hikers only and is designated as a good trail for botanical studies. This trail is accessed from the picnic area along the river below the village and across from the mill. The Ravine Trail is tree covered and hilly with an overlook of the river. Wild Phlox and Spring Beauties can be found among other intriguing wildflowers. Animal lovers should be on the lookout for white-tailed deer, fox, beaver, and rabbits. Bird watchers will likely see wild turkey, hawks, and herons. Migrating wood ducks may be seen in spring in Rancocas Creek.

Another opportunity to see wildflowers is at the southern end of the park. Drive further down Smithville Road to the parking lot at the intersection of East Railroad Avenue. The trail from this parking lot goes east through the woods and arrives at a picnic area. From this opening, the trail curves west back into the woods and follows Rancocas Creek. Among the trees that line the riverbank you might imagine you’ve just seen some children of the 1800s enjoying the “swimming hole” for the riverbank shares the memories of this idyllic past (but is now used as a kayak stopping point).

Follow the trail back out to Smithville Road and cross the road until you come to a path on your left that goes to the south. This trail takes you to the Floating Trail, which gives a great view of the lake. If you arrive at the right moment in spring, the water is pulsing with the splashing and wallowing of fish as they lay their eggs on the lake’s edge. Next, take the trail beyond the on this trail you will see the pink and white phlox. The trail goes southeast to West Railroad Avenue where you intersect again with Smithville Road and return to your parked vehicle.

The park has the usual rules: hikers are asked to stay on the trails and don’t litter. Dogs must stay on a leash and all-terrain bikes must use designated trails only and must give right-of-way to hikers. Remember to take only pictures and never pick the wildflowers. Three clean, well-kept rest rooms are located near picnic areas and sites of interest. The park provides well-designed maps, which can be obtained from the web site at www.co.burlington.nj.us/departments/resource_conservation/parks

Enjoy the Trails!

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