



TRAIL WALKER

NEW YORK-NEW JERSEY TRAIL CONFERENCE • CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH NATURE SINCE 1920

Celebrating 95 Years of the Appalachian Trail's Origins at Bear Mountain

Most trail lovers know the Appalachian Trail runs from Springer Mountain in Georgia to Mount Katahdin in Maine. But quiz even the most enthusiastic thru-hiker, and she may not even realize that the Trail's true start is right here, less than 50 miles north of Manhattan.

Ninety-five years ago this October, volunteers of the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference officially opened the first constructed section of the Appalachian Trail, which they built and blazed through Bear Mountain State Park. Nearly a century later, Trail Conference volunteers still selflessly give their time and energy to ensure that the 174 miles of A.T. spanning New Jersey and New York remain open, safe, and enjoyable for everyone who follows that iconic white blaze.

The Trail Conference invites everyone to explore this incredible trail; our maps, guide-

books, and website are great resources to get you started. As we celebrate 95 years of Appalachian Trail stewardship, we hope you'll be inspired to join us in making a positive contribution to the Trail's legacy.

Saturday, June 2, is a great day to get involved in volunteerism on the Appalachian Trail. Join the Trail Conference and REI as we celebrate National Trails Day by performing service projects along the A.T. on Bear Mountain. (See story below for details.)

In July, our A.T. volunteers will be out in full force from the Delaware Water Gap to the Connecticut border maintaining the Trail and engaging visitors as the thru-hiker "bubble" makes its way through our region. The RPH Cabin Volunteers will be holding their annual work weekend and barbecue July 13-15. (Read more on page 9.) And expect to spot an impromptu tailgate or two



ED O'HARA

at A.T. trailheads throughout the month as our trail family offers some trail magic.

Throughout the season, our trail crews will be working on several projects on the Appa-

lachian Trail, including the Long Distance Trails Crew's rehabilitation of the Trail on West Mountain in Bear Mountain State Park, and the West Jersey Trail Crew's restoration

of the Pochuck Boardwalk in Wawayanda State Park. June through October, the Bear Mountain Trail Crew will be working to complete a reroute of the original section of the A.T. on Bear Mountain. Our crews are eager to meet people who want to make a difference outdoors, and they excel at teaching volunteers with little or no experience the skills they need to help build and repair trails.

We'll be posting more details on these projects and events at nynjtc.org. Interested in a specific project, or want to find out about other volunteer opportunities that support the Appalachian Trail? Email volunteers@nynjtc.org, and we'll help you get started.

Liz Levers Inducted Into A.T. Hall of Fame

Elizabeth Levers, former president of the Trail Conference (1970-72), was named a member of the Appalachian Hall of Fame Class of 2018. Known as the "Mother of the A.T." in New York State, she was key in the early land acquisition planning for

the A.T. in New York, as well as setting the standard for A.T. management for our region. Liz was a no-nonsense woman who devoted her energies 7 days a week to the A.T. after her retirement from an administrative post at Columbia University. In 1979, she received recognition from President Jimmy Carter for her outstanding efforts as a trail volunteer.

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Show Your Love of Trails on National Trails Day



JERRICA LAVOY

Every day is trails day for the Trail Conference. But on National Trails Day, we add a little extra celebration to our stewardship. Join us Saturday, June 2, as we give back to the trails that offer us so much enjoyment—plus share some snacks and camaraderie!

Head to Mahwah, N.J., for our annual open house at Trail Conference Headquarters. The event includes tours of our offices at Darlington School-

house, guided hikes through Ramapo Valley County Reservation, and volunteer opportunities to help make a difference at this popular park, located right next door to our historic home.

Or check out our event on the Appalachian Trail at Bear Mountain, co-hosted by REI. From trail building to old trail closure, invasive species removal to litter clean-up, we'll be making a difference from

the bottom of the mountain to its summit.

Also on the 2nd, our Conservation Corps trail crews in Sterling Forest and Hudson Highlands state parks will be holding Trail Love days. Adventure-seekers who aren't afraid to get dirty are invited to learn the skills needed to help build and repair great trails.

Visit nynjtc.org/events more info on all of our National Trails Day events.

Protecting North America's Most Popular Hiking Destination



HANK OSBORN
SENIOR PROGRAM
COORDINATOR

Breakneck Ridge in Putnam and Dutchess counties' Hudson Highlands State Park has once again been named the most popular hiking destination in North America. In a recent survey on Trails.com, it received more than 10 million votes—more than hikes in any national park. As a consequence of its popularity, however, rugged and beautiful Breakneck Ridge is at risk of being damaged beyond repair.

Over the past 5 years, the number of visitors at Breakneck Ridge has increased at an alarming rate—we estimate that more than 100,000 people climb this mountain each year. Factors including social media, word of mouth, easy public transit access, and population density in the greater New York metropolitan region have created a perfect storm for trail overuse and environmental degradation.

There is no one solution to mitigating the effects of such remarkable popularity. But the Trail Conference is in a unique position to understand these challenges and provide assistance. Since 1920, we have been committed to educating and assisting the public in the safe, enjoyable, and responsible



use of trails.

In spring 2013, the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation asked the Trail Conference for help. Our response was a one-month pilot called the Breakneck Ridge Trail Stewards Program. It was so

successful that the Trail Conference has continued the program weekends and holidays from Memorial Day through Thanksgiving every year since. Trail Stewards deliver much-needed services that would not otherwise be available to these visitors. (Read

Breakneck Ridge Trails Are Open!

The Trail Conference and our partners behind the Breakneck Connector project can confirm that Breakneck Ridge is open and will remain open through the 2018 hiking season. When the project is set to begin, we will provide ample notice regarding any closures or changes to the trails. Project improvements include the creation of a shared-use path connecting the Breakneck train stop and parking area to the Breakneck Ridge trailhead. It will also add new train platforms, pave the parking area, and add a new welcome center. Find more info at hudsonfordtrail.org. Follow us @nynjtc on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter for updates.

Breakneck Ridge from Metro-North and NYS Route 9D. It is the first major undertaking by the coalition that has been working for years to plan how best to manage concerns along Route 9D between Cold Spring and Beacon. Construction is expected to begin in 2019. (See sidebar for more info.)

The Trail Conference also anticipates playing an integral role in assisting the public when the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics spends Oct. 29-Nov. 5 at Breakneck Ridge, which has been identified as a 2018 Hot Spot. A Hot Spot is a "natural area that is being negatively impacted by recreational use" and is "facing the threat of irreversible environmental damage."

How can you help? The first step is to understand that everyone is responsible for protecting the environment. The Trail Conference is a great resource for learning how our use of trails and parks impacts these ecosystems—and how to give back to ensure our favorite outdoor destinations remain open, safe, and healthy for years to come. Spring is the perfect time to take a workshop and get out on the trails with us to learn more about how you can help protect the land you love. Get started at nynjtc.org/volunteer.

more on **page 8**.)

The Trail Conference is also a member of the alliance spearheading the creation of the Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail, which includes the Breakneck Connector—a project that will improve visitor safety while accessing

Trail Conference HQ Reopening Saturdays During Peak Season

With warmer weather comes extended hours at Trail Conference Headquarters. Our Trail Store will be open Saturdays during peak hiking season, beginning April 7. Stop by for maps, sunscreen, hats, and more from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., every Saturday

through November. We'd love to chat about trails with you.

If sharing hiking knowledge with your fellow outdoor enthusiasts sounds like a fun way to spend a few hours, we have a volunteer position for you! We are actively seeking Schoolhouse Stewards to tell

folks where to hike, spread our mission, and take sales. Bonus: Ramapo Reservation is right next door for great hiking before or after! For more information contact Jennifer Zack: jennifer@nynjtc.org or 201.512.9348 x824.

Jennifer Zack



JEREMY APCAR

TRAIL WALKER (USPS Permit #970-100) (ISSN: 0749-1352) is published quarterly by the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference as a benefit of membership. Subscriptions are available to libraries only at \$15 a year. Periodical postage paid at Mahwah, N.J., and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to the address below.

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New York-New Jersey Trail Conference, Inc.
600 Ramapo Valley Road
Mahwah, NJ 07430
201.512.9348

Opinions expressed by the authors do not necessarily represent the policy or position of the Trail Conference. Submissions for print consideration are welcome. Any unsolicited material accepted for print may be edited for style and length. Submission deadlines for TRAIL WALKER are Feb. 15 (Spring issue), May 15 (Summer issue), Aug. 15 (Fall issue), Nov. 15 (Winter issue). For information on advertising rates, please write or call.

TRAIL WALKER
VOLUME XLV, No. 2 SPRING 2018
AMBER RAY EDITOR
STEPHANIE HINDERER DESIGNER

MISSION STATEMENT
The New York-New Jersey Trail Conference is a volunteer-powered organization that builds, maintains, and protects public trails. Together with our partners, we strive to ensure that the trails and natural areas we share are sustainable and accessible for all to enjoy for generations to come.

The New York-New Jersey Trail Conference is a volunteer, non-profit 501 (c)(3) organization.

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Creating Parkland Through the Stewardship of Trails

Planning, patience, and a fair amount of luck are requirements when working on completing a long-distance trail—not just in the adventure of a successful thru-hike, but even more so in the actual creation of one of these trails.

Years—often decades—of coordination among public, private, and non-profit agencies and land owners goes into developing a long-distance trail, followed by the ongoing construction and maintenance it then requires. Early in the conception of a long-distance trail, the path is often laid out on the side of country roads or on private lands with permission from the landowners. But in the continuous efforts to reroute these trails onto undeveloped land—not only to pro-



tect the trail user, but also to improve the overall user experience—long-distance trails actually

have a tendency to create new parks and greenways.

The Trail Conference has played a significant role in establishing and stewarding not just one, but four long-distance trails in the greater New York metropolitan region: the Appalachian Trail, Long Path, Shawangunk Ridge Trail, and Highlands Trail. And through our efforts to conserve open space for these trails to traverse, the Trail Conference has acquired lands that have led to the formation of new

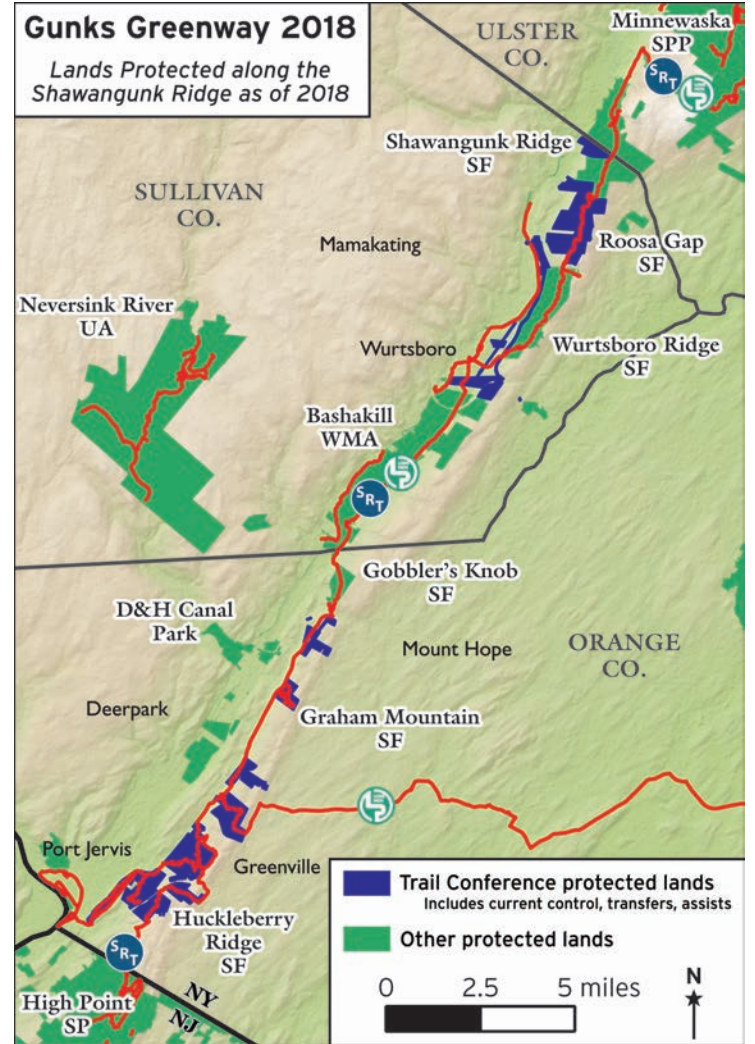
public parkland.

A recent example is the Shawangunk Ridge Trail, where since 2002, four new state forests (Huckleberry Ridge, Graham Mountain, Gobbler's Knob, and Roosa Gap) have been created, and another (Shawangunk Ridge) has been significantly enlarged.

Lately, the Trail Conference has purchased lands for the Highlands Trail, which will stretch across New Jersey and New York, from the Pennsylvania to Connecticut borders, when completed. In Orange County, N.Y., specifically, the trail traverses five protected parks and one forest—and we view the Highlands Trail as an opportunity to create an uninterrupted green corridor that connects all of them.

We have been calling this the Storm King to Sterling Forest Greenway. Though there are still major gaps between the parks, in collaboration with longtime partners Open Space Institute and Orange County Land Trust, we are working on inventorying the potential connections.

The goal for this study is to create a comprehensive vision for a high-quality, interconnected public trail system through a green corridor that will improve the quality of life for local communities while protecting precious wildlife habitat. The Greenway, with the Highlands Trail as its backbone, will showcase the western Hudson Highlands as a premier destination for outdoor



Since 2002, the Trail Conference has been acquiring parcels that have led to the formation of new public parkland along the Shawangunk Ridge.

recreation and magnificent scenery for residents and visitors alike.

This vision for the Highlands Trail will be completed with the help of our partners and volunteers—particularly those on our Conservation Committee, who help identify and purchase parcels for preservation, and our trail crews.

It will be a challenge, but it is one the Trail Conference is well-prepared for, and eager to see “thru.”

Edward Goodell
Executive Director
goodell@nynjtc.org

Get Involved

► Our long-distance trails exist because of the incredible passion of volunteers who want to be a part of their legacy. Maintainers and trail managers are always needed—adopt a section of the Highlands Trail, Shawangunk Ridge Trail, Long Path, or Appalachian Trail to call your own! Or come spend a few hours with one of our crews and help with the

ongoing task of reducing road walks by constructing new trail. Field-checkers and off-trail researchers may also be needed as the Storm King to Sterling Forest Greenway study moves forward. Help us preserve and expand our long-distance trail corridors! Learn more and discover all the ways you can get involved by emailing volunteers@nynjtc.org.

Strengthening Our Voice with a Trail Advocacy Roundtable



SONA MASON
WEST HUDSON
PROGRAM COORDINATOR

In the not-so-distant past, the 400-acre property in Chester, N.Y., that is now part of Goosepond Mountain State Park—onto which the Highlands Trail has since been relocated—seemed destined to become a suburban subdivision. If not for the diligent pushback from members of the community and groups like the Trail Conference, this important greenway linking isolated parks would have disappeared in the increasing tide of development.

These kinds of issues are common while creating and protecting long-distance trails like the Long Path and Highlands Trail. With so many unprotected acres along their trajectories, they need champions to stand up for them.

That's why the Trail Conference is organizing a Trail Protection Roundtable. The aim of the roundtable is to share knowledge from experienced trail advocates and to help equip those who would like to

do something positive for our trails. At the Trail Symposium held at our headquarters on April 7, staff and volunteers will speak about the nature of trail-related issues and the urgency that surrounds them. We'll discuss how threats to trails often pop up when we least expect them and require immediate action, which necessitates attendance and/or speaking at public hearings and strategy meetings, making calls or writing letters to town planning boards and elected officials, reviewing and writing documents, and occasionally, in-field surveying. We hope to continue the momentum from this conversation with regular roundtable meetings.

While the Trail Conference's nearly 100-year history is full of advocacy success stories, we do not fight these battles alone. Our actions and voice are amplified when we work together. If you would like to be a part of the Trail Protection Roundtable, contact West Hudson Program Coordinator Sona Mason at smason@nynjtc.org or 201.512.9348 x816 for more info.

More Progress in Orange County

Last August, the Trail Conference strongly objected to the potential loss of the last greenway connection for the Long Path and the Highlands Trail south of Schunmunk Mountain in Orange County. The powerful response of our trail family and friends caught the attention of legislators and community leaders, resulting in meetings with state and park officials, as well as representatives for the relevant land owners, to discuss ways to save the Highlands Trail and Long Path at this critical pinch-point in Monroe, N.Y. Trail Conference staff and volunteers are currently working on a proposal to obtain either an easement or land purchase for these trails. The negotiating process is slow, but we hope for a good outcome. This and other issues have galvanized our partners to create an official plan for a greenway from Sterling Forest to Storm King (see letter from our executive director above).

In Memoriam



John Bleninger

John B. Bleninger, of Wallkill, N.Y., died last summer at age 79. He grew up in the northeast Bronx, graduated from the City College of New York with a major in earth sciences, and went on to serve as a laboratory specialist with the New York City Board of Education at the old Stuyvesant High School for over 30 years.

John's true passion was for hiking and trail maintenance. In the early 1970s he joined the Trail Conference, where he put in more than 40 years of dedicated service, eventually becoming trails supervisor for Black Rock Forest and Storm King State Park. In

2015, the Trail Conference recognized his longtime devotion to trail work and meticulous attention to detail, which earned him the moniker “the Rembrandt of trail blazers,” with an Honorary Lifetime Membership. However, John preferred being called “the Michelangelo of trail blazers” because he said he not only painted, he also sculpted! Before his passing, John donated his artisanal collection of clipping and blazing tools to the Trail Conference for use by future generations of maintainers.

John was also active in the New York chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club and met his partner, Lalla Grimes, in 1989 through a personal ad in the magazine of the Appalachian Mountain Club. He retired in 1993 and moved out of New York City to be closer to his beloved Shawangunk Mountains, where he became active with the Mohonk Preserve and the Shawangunk Grasslands National Wildlife Refuge.

John lived a good life full of good adventures. He was a genuine, caring, and sensitive man who lived a full life and touched many with his gentle, meticulous ways. He is missed by many.

Save Our Oak Trees This Season



ERIC STONE
INVASIVE PROGRAM EDUCATOR
& VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

Who doesn't love oak trees? Deer, bears, and turkeys all fatten up for winter on their nutrient-dense nuts, while squirrels have the added bonus of using their branches for shelter. Humans have an affinity for these trees, too. With their spreading canopies and majestic trunks, oaks inspire awe and wonder in their old age.

Unfortunately, a new disease threatens our oak trees. Oak wilt, caused by a fungus that blocks the flow of water and nutrients through

the tree, causes the leaves to fall off and ultimately kills the tree. It can affect all species of oaks, although red oaks (those with pointed leaf tips) are more susceptible than white oaks (those with rounded leaf tips). The fungus moves from tree to tree via sap-eating beetles. These beetles are active throughout the spring and summer and are attracted to new cuts in the bark and branches—exactly the kind of cuts made by a pair of pruning shears.

You can help prevent the spread of oak wilt. If you need to prune trees, either in your yard or on the trail, please do so in the winter or fall, when

the fungus and beetles aren't as active. If you must cut a live oak branch during other times, please make sure to paint a wound-sealing compound onto the cut to prevent the beetles from feeding on the tree.

It is absolutely possible to stop the spread of this disease. Although widespread in the Midwest, in New York, oak wilt has so far been found only in Brooklyn and Suffolk, Schoharie, and Ontario counties. No infestations are currently known in New Jersey. Trail maintainers and homeowners near known infested areas should be especially careful to follow the preventive measures outlined above.



Red oak leaves after oak wilt infection

FRED BAKER, UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY, BUGWOOD.ORG

Join the Fight

You can help protect our parks and wild lands. The Trail Conference provides several ways to join the fight: from surveying trails for invasive plants, to removing invasives along our trails, to checking for insect

pests, to monitoring rare and endangered plants. To get involved, send an email to invasives@nynjtc.org with the subject "Join the Fight," and we'll connect you with opportunities to make a difference this season.

News in Brief

Grant Will Help to Restore Historic Trails in Harriman

Through the New York State Consolidated Funding Application, the Trail Conference has received a Recreational Trails Program grant to build and rehabilitate sections of the Ramapo-Dunderberg (R-D), Kakiat, Triangle, and Tuxedo-Mt. Ivy trails in Harriman-Bear Mountain state parks. Completed in 1921, the R-D, which spans the length of Harriman, was the first trail constructed by Trail Conference volunteers. These historically significant trails connect with several long-distance trail systems, including the Appalachian Trail, Long Path, Highlands Trail, and the route of the new Empire State Trail. Work on the Harriman-Bear Mountain Trails Improvement Project is expected to begin over the next few years.

Volunteers Make Presentation to Westchester Parks

On Feb. 6, four Trail Conference volunteers made a presentation at the Westchester County Parks, Recreation and Conservation Conference. Rose Bonanno described how the Trail Conference works with partners and clubs to support trails. Geof Connor shared the successes in improving trails at Ward Pound Ridge Reservation, the largest park in the Westchester County system. He explained how the trails there are maintained by a crew rather than individual maintainers, and how their presence has helped the trail system. Jeff Main, Ward

Pound Ridge Manager, gave an impromptu acknowledgement of the importance and dedication of Geof's East Westchester Trail Crew, which maintains more than 42 miles of trails in the park. Fred and Connie Stern provided tech support throughout the presentation, ensuring its success.

Your Gift to the Long Path or SRT Can Be Doubled

The Long-Distance Trails Memorial Fund was formed by the Trail Conference and our generous supporter/longtime volunteer Malcolm Spector to honor the memory of Jakob Franke, whose contributions to the Long Path and Shawangunk Ridge Trail (SRT) were immeasurable. Designate your gift of \$500 or more to benefit our work on the Long Path, SRT, or any public parkland through which either of these trails runs, and your donation will be matched, dollar-for-dollar. As a special thank you, you'll receive a Trail Conference Performance Tek Jacket. For more info, visit bit.ly/tc-ldtmf.

Wild & Scenic Film Festival Comes to Rockland County

Selected films from the Wild & Scenic Film Festival On Tour will be shown at the Lafayette Theater in Suffern, N.Y., on Earth Day, April 22. These environmental and adventure films illustrate Earth's beauty, the challenges facing our planet, and the work being done to protect the environment. Find more info at suffernfilmfest.com.

Advocacy Days: Encouraging Support for Trail Lands

Our voices are one of the most powerful tools we have in ensuring trail lands remain protected, open, and safe for all people to access. That's why Trail Conference staff and volunteers head to Albany every winter to speak with elected officials about the importance of connecting people with nature. This year, we focused on the following issues:

Feb. 6: Catskill Park Day

As a member of the Catskill Park Coalition, the Trail Conference asked state representatives to support a \$14.3 million Catskills Package. This funding would directly impact our ability to improve the trail experience in the Catskills through support of our Trail Stewards program and our work as managers of the Catskill Conservation Corps.

Feb. 12: EPF Day

Last year, Gov. Andrew Cuomo appropriated \$300 million for the 2017 Environmental Protection Fund (EPF), continuing the historic funding level he established the previous year. The EPF has directly supported the Trail Conference's rehabilitation of trails on



Our Conservation Corps Manager Geoff Hamilton, second from right, and many of our partners met with New York State representatives at Park Advocacy Day.

Bear Mountain, including the original section of the Appalachian Trail, as part of the Bear Mountain Trails Project. It funds the Lower Hudson Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM), for which the Trail Conference serves as the host organization. The EPF is an annual avenue of support for our projects, and we asked for its full funding. "Every representative I met with seemed to be awaiting news of how the Trail Conference has been approaching the increased popularity of outdoor recreation," said Senior Program Coordinator Hank Osborn, who attended EPF Day. "They asked my opinion about various environmental initiatives they were embarking

on, from sewer discharge to Lyme disease and tick signage. Advocacy days are raising the awareness of our organization and the understanding of our good work."

March 5: Park Advocacy Day

The Trail Conference supports the continued revitalization of the New York State park system, home to a significant number of trails that we maintain and monitor. We met with representatives to stress the importance of funding for state parks, particularly the operating resources that keep our parks open. Inadequate staffing of maintenance crews and forest rangers affects park accessibility and visitor safety. It is a perennial issue that we will continue to raise.

Ceremony to Officially Open New Long Pond Ironworks Bridge

At Long Pond Ironworks State Park, the restoration of the the Wanaque River bridge—washed away in Hurricane Irene in 2011—was finally completed at the end of 2016, with the finishing touches added late last year. At 11:30



a.m. on Saturday, April 14, the Friends of Long Pond Ironworks will be holding a ceremony with speakers from the Trail Conference and the

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection to officially open the bridge. Following the bridge dedication, an opening ceremony for the newly redesigned Long Pond Ironworks Museum will take place. Park for both events at the Visitor Center (1334 Greenwood Lake Turnpike, West Milford, N.J.). Arrive by 11 a.m. in order to walk to the new bridge in time. Visit bit.ly/tc-lpiwb for more info.

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New Signage Takes Guesswork Out of Your Trail Experience



PETER DOLAN
 NEW JERSEY
 PROGRAM COORDINATOR

We've all been there before—slowing the car to a crawl on some backwoods road, craning our neck for the telltale 2x3-inch splash of color that indicates a trail crossing. Or standing puzzled on a roadside pull-off, trying to figure out if the short stretch of gravel is indeed the parking “P” indicated on our map. Or staring, bemused, at a beautiful kiosk stocked with little but cobwebs.

The Trail Conference is continuing to work with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection on providing quality trailhead signage, and over 300 sign panels have already been delivered to nine



Over 300 trailhead signage panels have been delivered to state parks in northern New Jersey.

different state parks across northern New Jersey. The current phase of the project is producing trail parking signs with blazes, making it easier to tell that you're in the right place when looking for those sneaky “hidden” trailheads.

Several state park superintendents have also provided lists of confusing trail intersections so that we can help ensure the fewest lost hikers possible.

Our ability to get so much done on this project is due in large part to volunteer involve-

ment. When volunteer Glenn Gross saw a Trail Walker article about kiosk construction and offered to help, his background as a professional sign maker came up—and turned out to be a perfect fit. Now Glenn is using his tools and skills to churn out beautiful routed signs with professional text and logos, producing far more than we ever expected to be possible on our grant budget. Just one more way in which volunteer expertise allows us to go further and do more in our mission!

Keep an eye out for these new materials as they go up over the coming year, and if you spot them in the wild, be sure to snap a photo and tag us @nynjtc on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter for a chance to be featured on our feed.

People for Trails



1 Trail Conference Field Manager Erik Mickelson has been named a Trail Advocate of the Year by mountain bike gear company Kitsbow. Erik has been instrumental in developing multi-use trails in Sterling Forest State Park and strengthening our alliances with mountain biking partners. With this honor, Kitsbow not only recognizes Erik's work and dedication to improving trails, but also encourages trail users to give back and get involved in our trail maintenance, construction, and advocacy initiatives. Congrats, Erik!

2 Volunteer Kevin McGinness has taken on the role of Long Path South Chair, overseeing

the trail from Manhattan to US 209 in Wawarsing, N.Y. He has been a maintainer for the High Tor section of the Long Path in Rockland County, and has co-led educational hikes along the trail. He is an excellent addition to our roster of trail chairs. Welcome, Kevin!

3 The Trail Conference Board has approved the appointments of our 2018 Regional Trails Council Chairs, who help with the coordination of activities and issues within our four regions. Please welcome chairs Chris Connolly (New Jersey), Jane Daniels (East of the Hudson), and Rich Jobsky (West of the Hudson). The Catskills position is currently vacant.

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TRAIL CONFERENCE

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Rockland County
 TOURISM

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

Recognizes significant service or a special achievement by Trail Conference volunteers.

Glenda Haas, nominated by *Brendan Cunningham*
As chair of the Art Selection Committee, Glenda has added “gallery” as a new function of the Main Hall at Trail Conference Headquarters.



A resident of Mahwah, N.J., Glenda was responsible for the installation of the building’s history wall and gallery system. She has overseen or assisted with every art exhibition the organization has hosted since moving our offices to Darlington Schoolhouse, and has art exhibitions and events planned at Headquarters through 2020. Since 2015, Glenda has done a phenomenal job of bringing together professional artists, casual photographers, trail users, and the local community, creating a space for all to enjoy.

Jim Piombino, nominated by *Erica Colace & Gary Willick*
As a front desk volunteer, Jim is welcoming and knowledgeable—the best traits for someone who greets visitors at Trail Conference Headquarters.



Jim, of Fair Lawn, N.J., is also an at-large voting member, which means he represents the interests of 400 individual members at voting member meetings. He understands the inner workings of the Trail Conference and brings his expertise to these meetings. As if this weren’t enough, he was instrumental in helping us secure a matching \$5,000 donation. Jim’s passion and outgoing demeanor make him one of the best Trail Conference volunteers!

Pete Tilgner, nominated by *Don Weise*
Over his 31 years of service to the Trail Conference, Pete, of Tenafly, N.J., has most recently functioned as a volunteer extension of the



Membership and Development department, sending donation acknowledgements and membership gifts on a weekly basis. This important work requires focus and organizational skills. It can be tedious and long, especially at year’s end. We rely on Pete for his speed, accuracy, and consistency to make sure we “get it right” every time. Pete and his wife Suzan also served for more than a decade as the trail supervisors of Sterling Forest State Park. On and off the trail, Pete’s contributions have made us proud to call him a member of our trail family.

2018 TRAIL CONFERENCE AWARDS**CELEBRATING OUR VOLUNTEERS AND PARTNERS**

Trail Conference volunteers make incredible commitments to the trails and lands they love. With more than 2,400 people donating their time and energy to our mission, there are many award-worthy volunteers in our ranks. On March 10, we honored those who have gone above and beyond in the last year at our annual Volunteer Appreciation event, held at Ramapo College of New Jersey. Trail Conference awards are given by the Board of Directors upon recommendation by staff and volunteers.

PAUL LEIKIN EXTRA MILE AWARD

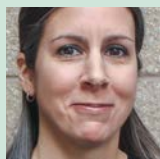
Recognizes those who have demonstrated exceptional service and have gone “the extra mile.”

Steve Aaron, nominated by *Heather Darley*
Steve, of Valley Cottage, N.Y., takes phenomenal photographs of trails in our region and shares them with the Trail Conference for use in our communications. Steve’s generosity, passion for the outdoors, and creative contributions allow us to increase our visibility and outreach. The use of Steve’s photography in our social media has received a lot of meaningful attention and sparked a lot of conversations with potential volunteers and members. Steve enthusiastically shares his photography, and he’s told us that it fulfills his passion for the art to see his work used in our work. Photography at the level of Steve’s skill is a true donation to our organization. The Trail Conference is lucky to have such talent and passion in our ranks!



and help us get valuable data on the spread and distribution of invasive species. They volunteered more than twice as many hours as anyone else in the Blockbuster Program, and we are incredibly grateful for their help in ensuring its success throughout Rockland County.

Jennifer Ghahari, nominated by *Geoff Hamilton*
Jennifer, of Riverdale, N.J., has only been volunteering with the Trail Conference for a few months, but during her 400-plus hours of service, she has proven to be a huge asset to the Conservation Corps. Her efforts have helped keep on track a program that doubled in size in 2017 but had a third of the previous year’s staffing. Jennifer’s incredible ability to process data and her attention to detail were integral in the successful completion of the 2017 Corps season and preparation for 2018.



Jennifer’s efforts did not stop there. Her analytical talents were sought after and utilized by others—from interpreting data collected in the Trail User Survey, to helping to improve volunteer management processes, to volunteering with the Invasive Strike Force. Her desire to learn and to assist anyone who asks has become a thing of legend at Headquarters.

Todd Jennings, nominated by *Sona Mason*
Todd, along with Trail Conference Board member Ken Posner (who was co-nominated for this award, but is ineligible to receive it due to his position on the Board), created the popular Long Path Trail Race Series. Their aim was to get “more people

running and hiking on New York’s beautiful trails and [to] build awareness for the Long Path and the work of the Trail Conference and its volunteers.” Their success is truly admirable.



Recruiting from their base of race competitors and social media followers, Todd, who is the Southern Shawangunks Trail Chair and maintainer for a section of the Highlands Trail where he lives in Monroe, N.Y., and Ken have achieved an historic record of 100% maintainer occupancy of the trails along the southern Shawangunk Ridge. They also lead work trips to keep trails along the Ridge clear and encourage race participants to give back by donating to the Trail Conference.



John Pappas and Katie Kingsbury, nominated by *Steve Weissman*
John and Katie are a dynamic supervisory team for the southern and northern sections of the New Jersey Appalachian Trail. Katie, of Barrington, N.J., began maintaining the section of the A.T. that passes by Sunfish Pond more than 15 years ago and has been responsible for overseeing the maintenance of the A.T. from the Delaware Water Gap to the Buttermilk Falls Trail for the last 10 years. Katie introduced John to her passion for maintaining the Trail in 2005, and both have been a vital part of the New Jersey Appalachian Trail Committee ever since.

In May 2013, John, of Oak

Ridge, N.J., took over as the supervisor for the northern section of the Trail that includes the Pochuck Boardwalk. John and Katie have devoted dozens of hours to the recent redecking of the Boardwalk. John has also been chronicling this ambitious project with videos on the N.J. Appalachian Trail Maintainers Facebook page. The Pappas-Kingsbury team richly deserves this award for their years of devotion to the maintenance of the Appalachian Trail in New Jersey.

Irene Voce and Tom Hobbick, nominated by *Linda Rohleder*

Over the past year and a half, Irene and Tom have shown sustained dedication and enthusiasm for our Invasive Species program. Beginning as Invasive Strike Force surveying volunteers, these Suffern, N.Y., residents have also committed over 440 hours to performing critical data entry for our 2016 Blockbuster program, creating new smartphone survey apps for our 2017 Blockbuster and ISF programs, and engaging in training sessions for volunteers. They continue to help by developing more efficient methods to manage the information and data that we receive across our different programs, including helping to redesign our database. Tom and Irene have been instrumental in broadening our scope of how we use our tools to increase volunteer engagement and in ongoing development of tech solutions for our program operations.



Ann and Jerry Barry, nominated by *Eric Stone*
Ann and Jerry went above and beyond with their work on the Invasive Species Program’s Blockbuster Surveys in 2017. In addition to surveying their own 3-mile by 3-mile square in Rockland County for invasive plants, the Suffern, N.Y., residents went out of their way to join other surveyors in the field to learn the survey process

WILLIAM HOEFERLIN AWARD

Recognizes Trail Conference volunteers who have demonstrated exemplary service to trail maintenance, management, and/or trail land protection.

Geof Connor, nominated by Rose Bonanno
Geof has volunteered for the Trail Conference since 2007, first in Hudson Highlands State Park, and now in county parks in Westchester County, N.Y. Over the years, he has served as supervisor, trail chair, crew leader, and certified sawyer. Geof, of Katonah, N.Y., has been instrumental in not only building trails, but also building strong relationships with land managers. He visits the parks he supervises daily with his dog, which is why he is so knowledgeable about these trails—and why he has become known as a go-to person for solving trail problems. With his passion for trails and dedication to improving access to nature, Geof embodies the very best of the Trail Conference.



began with an e-mail in 2010 about new trails in a park near her house. She first became a trail maintainer, then crew chief and supervisor. A boots-on-the-ground person, Mary, of Mohegan Lake, N.Y., started the Westchester Trail Tramps to help maintain trails at Teatown Lake Reservation. Within a year, the Tramps gained the skills to do trail repairs—and soon began constructing them. Mary became Teatown-Cortland Supervisor when trails in the Town of Cortlandt needed help. In 2015, Mary also agreed to be supervisor on the trails in the southern Hudson Highlands. Whether it is designing trails or supervising a crew trip (or assisting other crews), Mary works tirelessly for trails under her purview.



Thom Patton, nominated by Sona Mason
Thom spends endless hours ensuring the Long Path remains open and functional

in Harri-man State Park. A Trail Conference volunteer for eight years, the Westwood, N.J., resident diplomatically handles tricky trail and people issues, never giving up until reaching a solution. Always ready to lend a hand, Thom goes above and beyond to create a better trail experience.

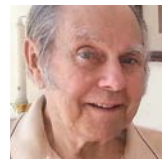


Rick Loggia, nominated by Moe Lemire
For over 20 years, Rick has been manager of the Appalachian Trail Corridor in Orange and Rockland counties in New York. A.T. boundary monitoring is one of the most underappreciated and difficult positions on the Appalachian Trail, yet he has served in this role—and mentored many others under him—with skill and grace. Rick, of Middletown, N.J., has been a dedicated man-



ager, always recruiting new volunteers and providing great training to his team. He is always a pleasure to work with; there are never any complaints or bad words about him. While Rick is preparing to retire from his role as manager, he will continue to monitor the Corridor—just one more sign of his dedication to protecting the Appalachian Trail and passion for giving back.

Bob Messerschmidt, nominated by Don Weise
For 50 years, Bob maintained the Posts Brook Trail in New Jersey's Wyanokie region. Bob, of Bridgewater, N.J., performed this service responsibly and reliably, both as a club maintainer and an individual maintainer. After retiring from his post, Bob continued to assist and mentor other maintainers and has been a steadfast supporter of the Trail Conference and our mission.



MAJOR WILLIAM A. WELCH TRAIL PARTNER AWARD

Presented to those outside the Trail Conference (for example, state, federal, or local agency partner officials) who have given long and/or significant assistance to the Trail Conference.

Essex County, New Jersey, nominated by Peter Dolan
Essex County—particularly Tara Casella, Director of the Essex County Environmental Center—provided assistance in promoting and developing the 34-mile, cross-county Lenape Trail. This included storing trail bollards, assisting with permits and approvals, coordinating installation, and hosting volunteer recognition events, among other helpful acts. Their enthusiasm for and dedication to improving the Lenape Trail helps to ensure this unique trail will remain accessible for all for many years to come.



Town of Yorktown Department of Parks and Recreation,

nominated by Jane Daniels
Since 2010, multiple levels of the Town of Yorktown's Department of Parks and Recreation have been partners to the volunteers of the Trail Conference. Three different park superintendents have all been supportive of adding trails, making improvements, and building structures such as bridges, puncheon, and boardwalks for this community in Westchester, N.Y. Park workers have been instrumental in ensuring the success of larger projects, hauling lumber and providing other assistance when needed. When a bridge was destroyed in 2016, the superintendent immediately asked if volunteers could fix it—which they did. This productive relationship is a perfect example of how land managers and volunteers work together to improve access to nature.



NEXT GENERATION AWARD

Given to those under age 21 who make significant contributions of time and energy to trail building or protection.

TJ Robinson, nominated by Tom Robinson
TJ is 13 years old and has been working hard with Wawayanda State Park staff and the West Jersey Trail Crew on restorations on the Appalachian Trail's Pochuck Boardwalk. He worked on hundreds of feet of curbing, laid decking, and hauled scrap out and fresh material in. He was very excited about cranking the grip-hoist for the "material transport high-line." TJ, of Harriman, N.Y., is passionate about the outdoors—he's one of the youngest people to finish the Catskill 3500—and is enthusiastic about protecting nature for others to enjoy. He is an eager and steady worker who understands the importance of the job and of giving back.



LEO ROTHSCHILD CONSERVATION AWARD

Presented to a person or organization that has made a significant contribution to the protection of our trails and/or the natural lands that surround them.

Bob Ross, nominated by Ed Goodell, Sona Mason & Peter Dolan
As an active member of the Conservation Committee, Bob is a dedicated champion of protecting open space for trails. Bob, of New York, N.Y., has been instrumental in helping the committee identify and secure numerous parcels for conservation, particularly in New Jersey, where he previously lived. In the recent past, he has been a great benefactor to many projects and programs, such as restoration of the Darlington Schoolhouse and enhancing Trail University. There were two recent land acquisitions for which Bob went above and beyond as a volunteer. First, as our legal representative, Bob



helped close on a property in Orange County, N.Y., that is crucial to the protection of the Highlands Trail. Bob has also been a key asset in acquiring a property in Albany County, N.Y., that would protect the Long Path. His hard work and dedication over the years has helped ensure the protection of trail lands across the region.

Noah Zakim, nominated by Sona Mason
Noah is doing excellent work in our urgent push to protect a green corridor for the long-distance Long Path and Highlands Trail in Orange County, N.Y., which are at risk of being severed by development. As an attorney generously donating his time to our Conservation Committee, Noah, of Franklin Lakes, N.J., is a valued member of the team, dispensing expert advice and assisting with the many facets that go into land preservation and advocacy.



DON DERR AWARD

Recognizes those who have provided exemplary service and outstanding contributions to major projects, such as our trail maps and publications.

Ed Burdzy, nominated by Jeremy Apgar
Ed has made consistent and long-time contributions to several Trail Conference maps. Ed, of Passaic, N.J., is a hike leader with the Harriman Hikers club, and through his hikes around the region, he has become quite attuned to discovering trails and woods roads that should be included on our maps. For at least a decade, Ed has regularly stopped by Headquarters at least once a month to both transfer collected GPS data and discuss map-related items. Ed also assisted in inventorying trail features and deficiencies in several state parks in Rockland County. Among the maps Ed has helped to provide data or field-checking for are: Harriman-Bear Mountain, Jersey Highlands, Kittatinny, North Jersey, Sterling Forest, and West Hudson. Our maps are accurate and detailed because volunteers and partners take the time to collect data, field-check, and review the maps. Ed is one of those dedicated volunteers whom we can thank for helping make the maps the reliable trail resource they have come to be known for.



CORPORATE PARTNER AWARD

Given to businesses or their employees for outstanding service to the hiking community.

Mountain Tops, nominated by Hank Osborn
Mountain Tops' support of the Breakneck Ridge Trail Steward program is unparalleled. Based in Beacon, N.Y., Mountain Tops has been the most consistent sponsor of the program since its creation in 2013. Every season, Mountain Tops has provided uniforms of the highest quality to each Breakneck Steward, fitting more than 30 Stewards over the years. They have been exceedingly generous with their time and commitment to this program.



Long Path End-to-Enders

The Trail Conference offers a certificate and an end-to-end patch "rocker" to anyone who hikes the entire length of the Long Path. The trip can be completed in one continuous trip or in a number of hikes over many

- years. The following people became end-to-enders in 2017 and were acknowledged at the Volunteer Recognition event.
- ▶ #145 **John A. Papirio** finished on 8/29/2016
- ▶ #147 **Ken Morgan** finished on 11/1/2016
- ▶ #148 **Franklin Marra** finished on 7/13/2017
- ▶ #149 **Laura Smith** finished on 7/22/2017
- ▶ #150 **David Booth** finished on 9/17/2017
- ▶ #151 **Heather Houskeeper** finished on 10/17/2017
- ▶ #152 **Scott Weis** finished on 10/17/2017
- ▶ #153 **Joe Baldino** finished on 11/5/2017
- ▶ #154 **Daniel Anderson** finished on 11/19/2017

TRAIL CONFERENCE 2017 LOOK BACK, 2018 LOOK AHEAD

In 2017, the Trail Conference served as the stewards of more than 2,150 miles of trails throughout the greater New York metropolitan area—from Manhattan to Albany, the Delaware Water Gap to the Taconics and beyond. Check out the achievements of our volunteers and staff over the last year, and see what's to come in 2018.



HEATHER DARLEY

How We Create Better Outdoor Opportunities Through Stewardship

The ecological integrity of the region's most beloved outdoor destinations is being threatened by the unexpected high volume of use at these special places. The Trail Conference is responding to this challenge by taking a leadership role in coordinating stewardship efforts to keep up with growing threats.

To help mitigate the impact from high use and educate users, we have partnered with land managers to begin a multi-phased approach on the Appalachian Trail, at Breakneck Ridge, and in the Catskills. It is our belief that the most effective way to advance change is through user education, public participation, and sustainable, on-the-ground solutions. We can create Better Outdoor Opportunities Through Stewardship (BOOTS). Our Trail Steward program is an integral part of our response to these threats.

When designed and used responsibly, trails protect both the people who use them and the environment that surrounds them—but without education, trail lands are subject to mistreatment and misuse. With lead support from REI and generous contributions from the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, Catskill 3500

2017 Trail and Summit Stewards

In 2017, the Trail Steward program educated and assisted 88,329 visitors across three parks in New York State. They counted 9,485 visitors in the Catskills; 28,556 visitors at Bear Mountain; and 50,288 visitors at Breakneck Ridge on weekends and holidays from Memorial Day Weekend through November. Twenty-one Stewards shared information about park regulations, hiker safety, preparedness, and other best practices.

Club, Catskill Mountain Club, Hunter Foundation, Mountain Tops, Dutchess County Tourism, Michelle Smith, and Seamus Carroll, the Trail Conference's Trail Steward Program educated and assisted nearly 88,400 trail users about safe, responsible, and enjoyable use of trails during 2017.

From spring to fall, Trail Stewards were deployed at four parks in New York State: in Hudson Highlands State Park

Preserve at Breakneck Ridge; in the Catskill Forest Preserve on the summits of Slide, Giant Ledge, North Point, and Blackhead, and at the popular Peekamoose Blue Hole; at Bear Mountain State Park on the Appalachian Trail; and at the Reeves Meadow trailhead in Harriman State Park. Stewards provided outreach and information about park regulations, hiker safety, preparedness, and other best practices. In addition to readying hikers, Stewards helped discourage and mitigate misuse of trails and the surrounding lands through their education and public relations work.

In partnership with each land manager, we were also able to leverage our presence at these outdoor destinations to conduct a Trail User Survey. Stewards collected 303 survey responses; we found that roughly half of the respondents were first-time visitors to their respective parks. Gender has nearly equal representation, and two-thirds said they were between the ages of 18-45. Understanding more about trail users, their expectations, interests, and other key data enables the Trail Conference and its partners to be better prepared to support and educate the public.

CATSKILLS

2017

- ▶ The new German Hollow and Batavia Kill lean-tos, built by volunteers in partnership with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, were officially opened for visitors.
- ▶ The Trail Conference-managed Catskill Conservation Corps coordinated a litter clean-up at Peekamoose Blue Hole as part of the Leave No Trace Hot Spot Week held at this popular outdoor destination. Over 40 volunteers removed more than 18 bags of trash from the swimming hole and surrounding area.
- ▶ The Rockalaka Trail Crew made improvements to the Quarry Loop Trail in Sloan Gorge Preserve and constructed reroutes on the Gorge Loop where the trail was steep or susceptible to flooding. In Platte Clove Preserve, the crew built a nature loop trail where a

social path formed to bring visitors closer to Plattekill Creek. The crew also performed maintenance on the existing Waterfall Trail, a heavily used trail to Plattekill Falls that was narrow and eroded. Throughout the season, four Conservation Corps members served alongside 25 volunteers.

2018

- ▶ Stewards will patrol the summits of Slide, Giant Ledge, North Point, and Blackhead mountains from Memorial Day through Columbus Day.
- ▶ Lean-to maintenance and construction will continue in several locations.
- ▶ Trail improvements are anticipated to take place on Overlook Mountain, and on the Red Hill and Huckleberry Point trails.
- ▶ We'll continue our efforts to improve the user experience in the Catskills by holding several litter clean-ups at some of the region's most popular destinations.

EAST OF THE HUDSON RIVER

2017

- ▶ In FDR State Park, the Crom Pond Trail, featuring a 32-foot outlet bridge with a 50-foot boardwalk on the north side and a 25-foot ramp on the south side, was officially opened by the volunteers and park staff who worked together to build it.
- ▶ The Taconic Trail Crew continued its efforts to make the Undercliff Trail more sustainable and user-friendly for hikers looking for options around Breakneck Ridge. This year alone, they set more than 100 stone steps on the trail. The crew also built a 1-mile new section of the Highlands Trail connecting Hudson Highlands and Fahnestock state parks. In 2017, four Conservation Corps members served alongside 62 volunteers.
- ▶ In addition to maintaining the Ralph's Peak Hikers Cabin on the Appalachian Trail in East Fishkill, N.Y., the RPH Cabin Volunteers removed and replaced old steps at Miller Hill Road where the A.T. crosses the Taconic State Parkway.

Read more on [page 9](#).

- ▶ The East Hudson Trail Crew, along with members of the Trail Tramps, completed an extensive reroute of the Cornish Trail in the East Hudson Highlands. Read more about the Tramps' season on [page 9](#).
- ▶ Trail Stewards will once again be stationed at Breakneck Ridge from Memorial Day through November. We will help host the Leave No Trace Hot Spot Week at Breakneck Ridge Oct. 29-Nov. 5.
- ▶ From NYC to the Taconics, expect to see significant trail improvements throughout the East Hudson region. Our volunteers will be fixing worn-out trails and scouting new ones. From relocating bridges to improving signage, exciting things will be taking place all year to improve the trail experience. Some of the biggest projects include the Trail Tramps installing new puncheon and a bridge at Hudson Highlands Gateway Park, and the Taconic Crew finishing the rehabilitation of the Undercliff Trail.

RPH Cabin Volunteers: From A.T. Maintaining Club to Trail Crew



TIM MESSERICH
RPH CABIN
CREW LEADER

Sometime back in the spring of 2007, I was asked by Jim Haggett, chair of the Dutchess-Putnam Appalachian Trail Committee, “Do you want to build a new bridge behind RPH cabin?”

Since 1998, the Ralph’s Peak Hikers (RPH) Cabin Volunteers, a member club of the Trail Conference, has maintained the Appalachian Trail’s RPH Cabin in East Fishkill, N.Y. I knew the current bridge was getting completely flooded out at times, and a new bridge would be needed soon. After some short deliberation, I said, “yes.” Had I designed and built a bridge before? No!

With the help of the Trail Conference, design work started immediately. Excavation work went on throughout the spring; sponsors were lined up by June; and by the third week of July, 50 people showed up for

the build. Thus, a trail maintenance club was catapulted into major work projects. Since that summer of 2007, RPH Cabin Volunteers has taken on large projects along the A.T. from Fahnestock State Park to the Dover Oak in Pawling, N.Y.

Over the past 10 years, our club has procured a significant cache of tools and equipment. We have developed a network of volunteers both near and far who faithfully give their time and expertise each season to these projects. Several club members have used their specialized training in stone work to put in stone steps and retainer walls at numerous sites along the Trail. We create and maintain waterbars and treadways over wet areas to inhibit trail erosion. In 2013, we built another bridge at the trailhead off of Stormville Mountain Road. In 2017, we removed and replaced deteriorated steps at Miller Hill Road where the A.T. crosses the Taconic State Parkway.

The club has scheduled an annual work weekend every July for the past 15 years, during which major projects are completed. Over three days, volunteers set up an outdoor kitchen to provide hot meals for A.T. thru-hikers. Many hikers stay a day or more and participate in the trail work tasks.

All year long, the RPH Cabin maintenance is carried out by local volunteer club members. The tasks are endless: Biweekly garbage removal, building cleaning and painting, invasive weed/vine control, privy maintenance, grounds mowing, gardening, replanting trees, and bunk repair are ongoing.

We look forward to another year of service to the A.T. and are planning projects for the 2018 July work weekend and BBQ, to be held July 13–15. We hope to see you there! For more info, check out <https://sites.google.com/site/rphcabin>.



Tramps celebrate their many and diverse hats! Read more about the crew at bit.ly/tc-tt17.

Trail Tramps: Changes, Activities, Musings, and Hats!



MARY DODDS
TRAIL TRAMPS
CREW CHIEF

It’s been awhile since you’ve heard from the Tramps, and I know you are curious to know what we have been up to.

CHANGES

We dropped “Westchester” from our crew name and now are just plain old “Trail Tramps.” This reflects our determination to go where we are needed beyond Westchester County. We regularly stray into Putnam County, and the crew is “lent out” as needed.

ACTIVITIES

The Tramps ranged far and wide in 2017. As part of the East Hudson Trail Crew (EHTC), we completed an extensive reroute of the Cornish Trail in Hudson Highlands State Park Preserve. Working with volunteer leader Jane Daniels, we built a trail and bridge at FDR State Park, and improved tread in wet sections of Sylvan Glen Park Preserve trails by installing puncheon and boardwalk. Teatown Lake Reservation work included finishing trail reroutes, constructing and deconstructing bridges, and installing boardwalks. We also changed the blazes on the Teatown-Kitchawan Trail and did drainage work. We cleared a section of the Briarcliff-Peekskill Trail blocked by invasive plants and did a reroute around another heavily invaded section. For a third winter, the Tramps also participated in wildlife tracking programs sponsored by Teatown. Lately, we have concentrated our efforts on a reroute of the red

trail at Hudson Highlands Gateway Park that involves sidehilling and building crib wall and stone steps. Soon, we will start building an extension of the yellow trail at Gateway.

MUSINGS

I got to thinking about all the different hats Trail Conference volunteers (especially supervisors) wear. I am the supervisor of the Trail Tramps crew and of individual maintainers for trails in Westchester and Putnam. I am on Geof Connor’s Westchester East Trail Crew (WETC) and on Andrew Seirup’s EHTC. I also am a maintainer for several Yorktown trails under Jane Daniels’ supervision, and Jane in turn is on my crew. Rose Bonanno is the Westchester Trails Chair. She is also on my crew and the WETC. Fred Stern is all over the place—as sawyer, supervisor, crew member, maintainer, and A.T. monitor. We have fun explaining this to crew members who care about one thing only—working on trails. It doesn’t really matter to them who is supervising or which crew is officially doing the work. They just love being outdoors. The best crew days are those where we worked hardest and were rewarded by the completion of a new trail or bridge, boardwalk, crib wall, or stone staircase.

What can the Tramps expect in 2018? More big and small trail projects, another science project, lunches, hikes, and the camaraderie of people who love working outdoors! For more information on the Tramps and to find out how you can get involved, visit bit.ly/tc-tttc.



For more information on joining the RPH Cabin Volunteers, contact Tim Messerich at bascomgrillmaster@yahoo.com or 845.401.8817.

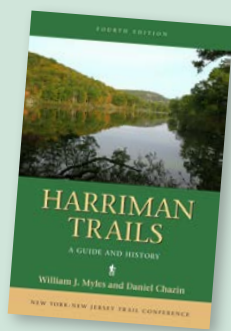
Publications

2017

- ▶ The second edition of *Circuit Hikes in Harriman* was published.
- ▶ The completely revised, 12th edition of the North Jersey Trails map set, with over 275 miles of marked trails in northern New Jersey, was released.

2018

- ▶ An updated East Hudson map set is now available.



Expected releases include revisions to the Hudson Palisades, Catskill, and Harriman-Bear Mountain trails maps, as well as the first edition of a map set featuring trails in Westchester County, N.Y. A fourth edition *Harriman Trails: A Guide and History*, is expected to be released in May. Read more on [page 15](#).

Conservation Corps

- ▶ In 2017, seven Trail Conference Conservation Corps crews served throughout the region improving trails and the lands they traverse. Thirty-five crew members were joined by 737 volunteers, together serving a total of 28,452 hours. Check out the accomplishments of the Bear Mountain, Floworks, Palisades, Rockalaka, Taconic, and Sweet Water crews throughout our regional Look Back highlights.

WEST OF THE HUDSON RIVER 2017

- ▶ The new, 3.5-mile, multi-use Hutchinson Trail officially opened in Sterling Forest State Park in March. It was built by members of the Palisades Trail Crew, including hikers, mountain bikers, and equestrians.
- ▶ The Palisades and Floworks trail crews worked on the multi-use Munsee Eagle Trail in Sterling Forest, building a total of 3.1 miles of new trail. The crews built six bridges, including a 70-foot stepping stone bridge. In 2017, 12 Conservation Corps members served alongside 207 volunteers.
- ▶ In August, the Trail Conference acquired land in Chester, N.Y., that is key to creating a greenway from Sterling Forest to Storm King state parks. Read more on **pages 3 and 16**.
- ▶ A section of the Highlands Trail in Chester was

rerouted through Goosepond Mountain State Park, eliminating a road walk.

- ▶ The Trail Conference raised the alarm that the Long Path and Highlands Trail are at risk of being severed in Orange County. We succeeded in making the protection of these trails part of the conversation in proposals to develop lands through which these trails cross.
- ▶ The Long Distance Trails Crew (LDTCC) concentrated its efforts on three projects: 1) rehabilitation of the Appalachian Trail in Harriman State Park near the top of West Mountain; 2) continued rehabilitation of the Long Path in Sam's Point Preserve, co-aligned with the Verkeerder Kill Falls Trail; and 3) rehabilitation of a 144-year-old bridge over Seeley Brook in Goosepond Mountain State Park. On these projects, 66 volunteers donated a total



Long Distance Trails Crew

- of 7,915 hours. The crew relocated/rehabilitated 1.25 miles of trail, including installing 182 stone steps, building 466 square feet of crib wall, constructing/rehabbing 499 feet of sidehilled trail, installing 27 waterbars, and removing 33 blowdowns.
- ▶ In the southern Gunks, volunteers stayed busy clearing overgrowth and improving blazing. As a result, the Shawangunk Ridge Trail has never been in better shape.
- ▶ The Hudson Nor'Westers improved the tread and

drainage of six trails at Minnewaska State Park Preserve. Stepping stones were placed, and three open stone culverts and two waterbars were added. General improvements to harden and raise trail where needed were also made.

- ▶ Two Conservation Corps crews serving on the reroute of the Appalachian Trail on Bear Mountain set 121 stone stairs and built 339 square feet of crib wall. Seven Corps members built 474 linear feet of new trail alongside 284 volunteers.

2018

- ▶ A trail opening and land preservation celebration will be held on April 21 at Goosepond Mountain State Park on the new section of the Highlands Trail. Read more on **page 16**.
- ▶ Several litter clean-ups will be held to beautify a number of trails and parks.
- ▶ Crews in Sterling Forest will work to complete the new 7-mile multi-use trail loop.
- ▶ In Minnewaska, the Hudson Nor'Westers plan to add bog bridging and more stepping stones on a number of trails, and rock steps on the Gertrude's Nose Trail, making the hike and stream crossing above Rainbow Falls safer.
- ▶ The LDTCC plans to complete the rehabilitation of the Appalachian Trail on West Mountain and work on the A.T. at Black Mountain. They'll also help reroute the Long Path in northern Harriman.

Rock Cores Trail Reroute Brings History Into View

Trail maintainer Jon Stelling, environmental scientist by day, enthusiastically adopted the Rock Cores Trail in New Jersey's Worthington State Forest when he moved to nearby Pennsylvania to complete his PhD at Lehigh University. But he was frustrated that the unique and historical significance of the trail's namesake "rock cores" feature was being kept secret.

More than 50 years ago, the Army Corps of Engineers proposed creating a dam at the Delaware Water Gap, which would flood the scenic valley and surrounding areas. After court challenges by conservationists and environmental groups lasting over three decades, the Tocks Island Dam project was abandoned—but not before the federal government acquired thousands of acres of private property via eminent domain. This land became the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, adjacent to Worthington.

Although construction of the dam was never started, footings for the proposed structure that would encroach into Worthington required drilling deep into the ground for several rock core samples.



Today, the Worthington core samples are visible links to a failed past. The 3-foot-wide, cylindrical samples of the rock underfoot can now be found along the newly rerouted Rock Cores Trail.

Thanks to Jon's advocacy of a reroute to avoid a washed-out section of trail, the West Jersey Trail Crew recently completed a relocation at the Rock Cores Trail's northern end. They installed a bridge over a stream that affords views leading to a giant rock cairn. The cairn draws the hiker's attention to the cores and serves as a monument to the victory of the environmentalists whose determination and perseverance prevailed in keeping the Delaware River in its natural state.

Visiting the Rock Cores

Soon-to-be expanded parking areas on Old Mine Road through Worthington State Forest will provide easier access to the Rock Cores Trail, which connects to the Douglas and Garvey Springs trails and provides a route up to Sunfish Pond. From Interstate 80 west-

bound, take the last exit in N.J. and keep right at the bottom of the ramp onto Old Mine Road. This is a great alternative to the congested and often full parking areas at the Dunnfield Creek exit. Trails in Worthington State Forest and the Delaware Water Gap can be found on the 2016 edition of the Kittatinny Trails map set.

NEW JERSEY

2017

- ▶ The trails at Campgaw Mountain County Reservation, as well as underutilized trails in Norvin Green and Long Pond Ironworks state parks, were reconfigured into more user-friendly "loop trail" systems.
- ▶ Around 300 people celebrated National Trails Day on June 3 at Trail Conference Headquarters. At this combined open house event/day of service, sponsored by REI, volunteers helped remove 38 bags of garlic mustard, six bags of litter, and even a kitchen sink from neighboring Ramapo Valley County Reservation.
- ▶ In April, Greater Blairstown officially became the first Appalachian Trail Community in New Jersey.
- ▶ The Trail Conference, in partnership with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), developed a new set of signage for installation in most of the New Jersey state parks and forests where we maintain trails. These signs not only educate visitors about these parks and trails, but also raise awareness of our stewardship efforts and encourage people to get involved. Read more on **page 5**.
- ▶ Trail Conference volunteers, in partnership with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy's Mid-Atlantic Crew and NJDEP, began work on repairing the popular Pochuck Boardwalk section of the A.T. in Wawayanda State Park. Our West Jersey Trail Crew replaced the stairs on the Pochuck Boardwalk suspension bridge and redecked approximately 1,000 linear feet of the Boardwalk.

- ▶ The West Jersey Trail Crew also completed an approximately 1/2-mile-long relocation on the Rock Cores Trail in Worthington State Forest, replacing a steep and rutted trail. (See story at left for more.) They replaced a bridge in Stokes State Forest and repaired another bridge in Tillmans Ravine.
- ▶ The 34-mile Lenape Trail in Essex County received numerous upgrades, including a full inventory and assessment of trail conditions, increased access with new signage in four parks, and an up-to-date map available in digital and print formats.
- ▶ The Sweet Water Trail Crew constructed over 534 feet of new trail on the Vista Loop in Ramapo Reservation. Not only does the reroute bring hikers along a stream to a popular waterfall, it is also built more sustainably than the old trail, featuring 45 stone steps that will prevent erosion and make the climb more accessible for hikers for years to come. In 2017, four Conservation Corps members served alongside 25 volunteers.

2018

- ▶ Improving signage at kiosks, parking areas, and trail intersections will continue to be a major project in New Jersey.
- ▶ The Conservation Corps crew in Ramapo Reservation will continue to make improvements to the

heavily used trails in this popular park while encouraging people to volunteer and join trail-building and maintenance workshops across northeastern New Jersey.

- ▶ The West Jersey Trail Crew plans to continue the redecking project on the Pochuck Boardwalk. They will replace the deteriorating puncheon on the Appalachian Trail near Rt. 94 in Vernon, and remediate trail erosion on the Appalachian Trail along Dunnfield Creek in Worthington State Forest. The crew will work on installing stepping stones in a wet area on the Cedar Swamp Trail in Wawayanda State Park, and replace a bridge on the Coursen Trail in Stokes State Forest.
- ▶ The Lenape Trail Crew will tackle several relocations to bring the Lenape Trail through important scenic, historic, and cultural locations, including the completion of Hilltop Reservation, the Eagle Rock September 11th Memorial, and the Presby Memorial Iris Gardens.
- ▶ The MEVO Trail Crew's main emphasis will be on improving some of Ramapo Valley County Reservation's most heavily used trails: the Vista Loop and Reservoir Loop. Occasionally, they'll travel farther afield in North Jersey to tackle projects identified by local trail chairs and park partners.



National Trails Day

INVASIVES

2017

- ▶ The Trail Conference was awarded a new, 5-year contract from the New York Department of Environmental Conservation to continue leading the Lower Hudson region's invasive species management efforts from 2018 to 2022.
- ▶ The Invasives Strike Force removed the first known infestations of slender false brome, a plant that has spread aggressively in Western New York and can fully take over the understory wherever it's found.
- ▶ We completed the first year of full-scale efforts to remove sticky sage along the Appalachian Trail. This plant, with sticky seeds, has the potential to spread quickly along the trail corridor and neighboring waterways. It is only known at one other location in New York, which we are actively managing.
- ▶ Invasives volunteers finished surveying our New Jersey Trails for phase 1 invasive plants.
- ▶ We brought on two new

full-time staff to organize and educate invasives volunteers and manage the seasonal Conservation Corps crew.

- ▶ By the end of the season,

439 volunteers devoted 5,024 hours to invasives surveying and management and native plant protection. The Invasives Strike Force (ISF) Crew removed

108,612 invasive plants. The program held 206 eradication projects for 57 species.

2018

- ▶ The ISF Crew looks forward to removing every slender

- false brome plant in the area and hopefully eradicating it before it can get a foothold in the Hudson Valley. We are also planning another year of heavy management and research of sticky sage along the A.T.
- ▶ With increased staff and generous donations of time and funds from volunteers, we've been able to expand our efforts into new programs for 2018 including: 1) The creation of a photographic database for invasive and native species; 2) Invasive Species for Trail Maintainers, a workshop for current trail maintainers to learn how to identify and manage invasive plants along their trail section; and 3) A possible drone program that would allow us to perform aerial surveys for invasive plants and forest pests and complete days of work in a matter of hours.
- ▶ We will continue our Invasive Strike Force surveys in New York and will resurvey many of the New Jersey Trails that haven't been surveyed in five or six years.



DANIEL POLLARD

The Invasives Strike Force Crew monitors and removes invasive species in our region.

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 and Development team at 201.512.9348.

ADK Long Island www.adkli.org	East Hampton Trails Preservation Society www.ehtps.org	Nassau Hiking and Outdoor Club www.nassauhiking.org	Somers Land Trust somerslandtrust.org/
ADK Mid-Hudson Chapter www.midhudsonadk.org	Flat Rock Brook Nature Association www.flatrockbrook.org	The Nature Place Day Camp thenatureplace.com/	South Mountain Conservancy Inc. www.somocon.org
ADK Mohican Chapter www.adkmohican.org	Friends Of Garret Mountain friendsofgarretmountain.blogspot.com	New Haven Hiking Club www.NHHC.info	Southampton Trails Preservation Society southamptontrails.org/
ADK North Jersey Ramapo Chapter www.hudsonhikers.org	Friends of Pelham Bay Park www.pelhambaypark.org/	New Jersey Forty Plus Hiking Club	Storm King Adventure Tours www.stormkingadventures.com
Adventures for Women www.adventuresforwomen.org	Friends of the Hackensack River Greenway in Teaneck www.teaneckgreenway.org/	New Jersey Highlands Coalition www.njhighlandscoalition.org/	Sundance Outdoor Adventure Society www.meetup.com/Sundance-Outdoor-Adventure-Society
AMC Delaware Valley Chapter www.amcdv.org	Friends of the Old Croton Aqueduct, Inc. aqueduct.org/	New Jersey Search and Rescue Inc. www.njsar.org	SUNY Oneonta Outdoor Adventure Club www.oneonta.edu/outdoors
AMC Mohawk Hudson Chapter www.amcmohawkhudson.org/	Friends Of The Shawangunks shawangunks.org/	New York City Audubon Society, Inc. www.nycaudubon.org	Teatown Lake Reservation www.teatown.org
AMC New York North Jersey Chapter www.amc-ny.org	Frost Valley YMCA www.frostvalley.org	New York Ramblers www.nyramblers.org	Tenafly Nature Center Association www.tenaflynaturecenter.org
Black Rock Forest Consortium Inc. www.blackrockforest.org	German-American Hiking Club gah.nynjtc.org/	The Outdoor Club, Inc. www.outdoorsclub.info	Thendara Mountain Club www.thendaramountainclub.org
Boy Scout Troop 121-Hudson Valley Council - Rockland District	Greener New Jersey Productions, Inc www.greenernewjersey.org	Palisades MTB facebook.com/groups/palisadesmtb	Town of Lewisboro www.lewisborogov.com/parksrec
Boy Scout Troop 8, Brooklyn	Hudson Highlands Gateway Task Force www.TownofCortlandt.com	Protect Our Wetlands, Water & Woods box292.bluehost.com/~powwworg	Trail WhippAss www.trailwhippass.com
Boy Scouts of America-Northern NJ Council www.nnjbsa.org	Hunterdon Hiking Club www.hunterdonhikingclub.org	Ramapough Conservancy, Inc.	TriState Ramblers TSR.nynjtc.org/Schedules.html
BSA Troop 21 - Hudson Valley Council www.suffern21.mytroop.us/	Long Path North Hiking Club www.schoharie-conservation.org	Rip Van Winkle Hikers newyorkheritage.com/rvw	University Outing Club www.universityoutingclub.org
Canal Society of New Jersey www.canalsocietynj.org/	Mohonk Preserve www.mohonkpreserve.org	Rock Lodge Club www.rocklodge.com	Urban Trail Conference, Inc. www.urbantrail.org
Catskill Mountain Club www.catskillmountainclub.org	Morris County Park Commission www.morrisparks.net	RPH Cabin Volunteers rphcabin.org	Valley Stream Hiking Club www.meetup.com/vshclub
Chinese Mountain Club of New York www.cmcny.org	Mosaic Outdoor Mountain Club of Greater New York, Inc. www.mosaic-gny.org/joomla/	SAJ - Society for the Advancement of Judaism www.thesaj.org/	Wappingers Greenway Trail Committee
Church Communities Foundation - Platte Cove Community www.bruderhof.com/	Musconetcong Mountain Conservancy mmc.nynjtc.org	Salt Shakers Trail Running Club www.saltshakersrun.com	Westchester Trails Association www.westhike.org
Closter Nature Center Association www.closternaturecenter.org		Shelton's Shooters Sussex 4-H Club	Yeshiva University High School Outdoors Club

Trail Conference Staff Update

Welcome Ben and Nancy

Ben Sugar, Field Manager, joined the Trail Conference in February. A Virginia native, Ben discovered a love



of the outdoors and trails in particular while building them for AmeriCorps in New Hampshire after college. Since then, he has led crews and managed trails for the Green Mountain Club; Montgomery County, Md.; and the U.S. Forest Service in Utah. Ben holds a B.A. in history from James Madison University and has

studied Recreation Resource Management at Utah State University.

Nancy Krause, Executive Assistant, joined the Trail Conference staff in March. Nancy was a church office manager



for the last 14 years while raising her family in Oakland, N.J. During that time, she was very active in and is now chair of the local Environmental Commission. She is also on Oakland's Shade Tree Commission and Green Team. Nancy has held several other community volunteer positions in schools and recreation programs as well.

Prior to moving to New Jersey, Nancy was park ranger at Gateway National Recreation Area and worked for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources as a wastewater specialist. Nancy has a B.A. in economics and a M.A. in environmental science. She is an avid cook and outdoors person who is most at home when she is camping.

TRAIL CONFERENCE SUPPORTERS

NOVEMBER 1, 2017 - JANUARY 31, 2018

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For the Conservation Corp, from our littlest love Benjamin Pond, #halfpinthiker
David Pond

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Happy Trails to Erica

Erica Colace

has left her position as executive assistant to become executive director of Grow It Green Morris-



town, a community-building nonprofit focused on local food access, education, and sustainability. Erica joined the Trail Conference in 2016 and played an integral role in helping the Board of Directors and senior staff fulfill the organization's mission. We thank Erica for her contributions and wish her the best of luck.

Trail Conference Gets Highest Rating from Charity Navigator

The Trail Conference has received a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator, America's largest independent evaluator of charities. This is the fifth consecutive year that the Trail Conference has earned this top distinction as a charity.

This ranking indicates that we adhere to sector best practices and execute our mission



in an accountable, transparent, and financially efficient way. A 4-out-of-4-star rating

verifies that the Trail Conference exceeds industry standards and outperforms most charities in our area of work. It also sets the Trail Conference apart as a trustworthy, responsibly managed charity.

With more than 1.5 million nonprofits across America, Charity Navigator aims to accentuate the work of efficient organizations. Check out what it means to be a 4-star charity and view our exceptional rating at bit.ly/tc-cn.

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PETE TILGNER



Explore 'Trails Near and Far' with Artist-Volunteer Pete Tilgner



SUSAN SAPANARA
ART SELECTION
COMMITTEE MEMBER

The Trail Conference invites you to take a journey with photographer-volunteer Peter Tilgner in the new exhibition "Trails Near and Far," on view March 8 through May 7 at our headquarters. Travel along as we view, through the lens of Pete's camera, his personal vision of the walkways and vistas he travels with Suzan Gordon, his partner in discovery. Escape with surrealistic imagery captured in a visual narrative of the artist's experiences. From Oregon's Creator Lake to the glaciers of Patagonia, Pete's visual storytelling will captivate.

Pete has worked as a visual artist for more than 40 years, 37 of which were as an artist-educator in the Ridgewood Public Schools in New Jersey. Photography and darkroom

If You Go

- ▶ **What:** "Trails Near and Far" featuring the work of Peter Tilgner
- ▶ **When:** March 8 through May 7 during regular Trail Conference hours, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday (and Saturdays, beginning April 7)
- ▶ **Where:** Trail Conference Headquarters, 600 Ramapo Valley Road, Mahwah, N.J.
- ▶ **Details:** Find out more at nynjtc.org.

skills were among the subjects he taught.

Pete has had one-person shows of his photography displayed at numerous cafes, galleries, and public buildings throughout the region. His work has been shown at mu-

seums around the country, as well as internationally. Pete's photographs are in the public collections of the Newark Museum, Prudential Insurance Company, Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, Ridgewood Public Schools, and the Trail Conference.

Pete has curated two exhibitions for the City Without Walls Gallery in Newark, N.J., and "Cuba Today, Through the Eyes of Twelve Photographers" for the Monmouth Museum in Lincroft, N.J.

Pete and Suzan were Sterling Forest Trail Supervisors for 14 years. Pete now maintains trails at the Tenafly Nature Center in Tenafly, N.J., and volunteers with the Trail Conference's Membership and Development department. For his exceptional work and dedication to the organization, Pete received a Distinguished Service Award on March 10 (see [page 6](#) for details).



STEVE AARON

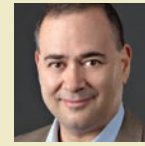
on registration with code NYNJ2018! For more info, visit blackrockforest.org or call 845.534.4517.

'Discovering the Long Path' on Display at Nyack Library

"Discovering the Long Path"—a 25-piece photo exhibition featuring the

diverse scenery of the 350-mile Long Path— will be on display in the staircase galleries at the Nyack Library for the month of May. On Thursday, May 17, the library will host a reception featuring the men behind the exhibit. Steve Aaron will discuss photographing the Long Path, and Ken Posner will discuss his book, "Running the Long Path." Visit nyacklibrary.org for more info, or call 845.358.3370.

Taxes and Charity: Money-Saving Tips



David J. Haas CFP®
President, Cereus Financial
Advisors, LLC

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA), signed into law late last year, may have reduced your ability to deduct charitable contributions from your taxes. Donations given to charitable organizations by individuals or couples are deductible on schedule A of the IRS 1040 tax form as itemized deductions. You can deduct your contributions if your itemized deductions are greater than the standard deduction. The TCJA has both increased the standard deduction and reduced the types of expenses that qualify for deductions. This means that many taxpayers will be hard-pressed to find enough expenses to itemize in 2018 and later. But there are solutions to this problem.

Bunching Deductions Using a Donor Advised Fund

A Donor Advised Fund (DAF) is actually a charity itself. So when you contribute money to a DAF, you get a tax deduction. At any point in time, you tell the DAF to distribute your funds to your favorite charities, including the Trail Conference. You could do this monthly, quarterly, or annually. Contributing to a DAF allows you to bunch two or more years of deductions into a single year. You'll be

able to itemize one year and take the standard deduction the next year. Using this method, you may be able to take full tax advantage of all your charitable donations.

Qualified Charitable Distribution

For those over age 70 ½, the Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) is another option. Many people have significant savings in their Qualified Retirement Accounts, such as IRAs and 401(k)s. Once you reach 70 ½, the government obligates you to start taking Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) from these accounts every year. You need to take these distributions and pay tax on them whether or not you need this income for your living expenses.

The QCD is a special distribution you can make from your IRA directly to a 501(c)(3) charity tax-free instead of your RMD. This allows you to donate to charity and avoid paying income tax on the distribution. You get the tax equivalent of a full deduction on your contribution from the first dollar you donate.

Everyone's tax situation is different. While these options may work for you, discuss it with a tax advisor before taking any action.

David is president and founder of Cereus Financial Advisors, LLC in Franklin Lakes, N.J., which specializes in comprehensive financial planning and wealth management for executives, professionals, and small business owners. He has been a Trail Conference member and volunteer for over 30 years.

LET'S GO CAMPING



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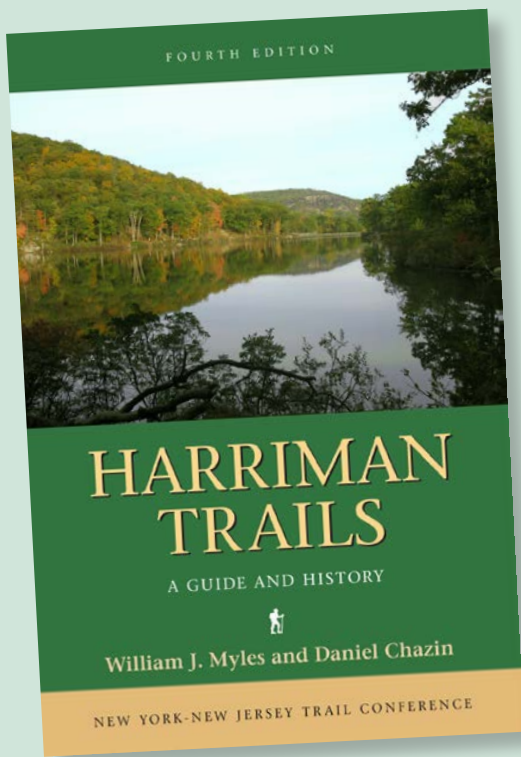
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News in Brief

Registration Open for Black Rock Forest Summer Science Camp

Kids (ages 11-15) in search of outdoor learning adventure can find it at Black Rock Forest's Summer Science Day Camp in Cornwall, N.Y., this July. The program offers weeklong experiences in nature working directly with scientists. The focus is on understanding nature through scientific observation and investigation, with classes that allow students to explore college and career possibilities in the natural sciences while having fun in Black Rock Forest. Trail Conference members receive a 15% discount



Must-Have *Harriman Trails* Guidebook Gets an Update

A revised, fourth edition of the popular guidebook *Harriman Trails: A Guide and History* is expected to be available in May. Last published in 2010, this comprehensive guide to hundreds of miles of trails in Harriman and Bear Mountain state parks has been significantly updated to include the new route of the Appalachian Trail over Bear and West mountains, the extension of the Fawn Trail, and relocations of sections of the Long Path, the Tuxedo-Mt. Ivy Trail, and the Ramapo-Dunderberg Trail.

A special feature of this

new edition is the inclusion of many historic photos that appeared in the first edition of the book and were thought to be lost. Additional scenic photos have been added, and historical information on the trails, originally prepared by the late Bill Myles, has been updated by Daniel Chazin. Each trail description has also been carefully reviewed and updated.

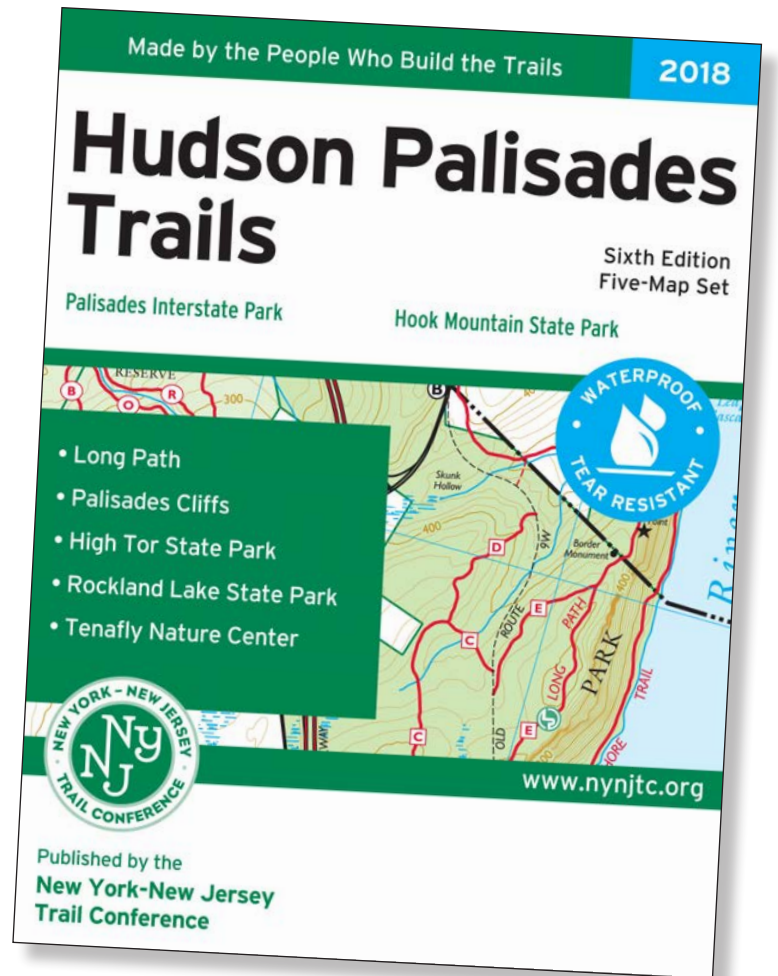
At a price of \$19.95 (\$14.96 for members), this guidebook is a must-have for outdoor enthusiasts interested in exploring the rich network of trails in Harriman and Bear Mountain.

Revised Hudson Palisades Maps Include Mileages

This spring, look for a revised, sixth edition of the Hudson Palisades Trails map set to connect you to more than 100 miles of marked trails and bike paths along the western side of the Hudson River from Fort Lee, N.J., northward to Haverstraw, N.Y. This newest edition features junction-to-junction trail mileage numbers on the map front and includes trail changes and map adjustments.

Trail mileage numbers give distances between trail junctions and important features along the trail, and this popular feature is now on more than half of our trail maps. The Hudson Palisades set includes approximately 40 miles of the Long Path, as well as trails in Palisades Interstate Park, Blauvelt State Park, High Tor State Park, Rockland Lake State Park, Tallman Mountain State Park, Buttermilk Falls Park, Clausland Mountain Park, Flat Rock Brook Nature Center, Tenafly Nature Center, and Rockleigh Woods Sanctuary/Lamont Reserve.

All maps include UTM gridlines, parking areas, viewpoints, and other points of interest. The set, sponsored by REI, will be available in print format in vibrant color on our popular waterproof, tear-resistant Tyvek, and downloadable in digital format on



Apple and Android devices through the Avenza Maps app. The sixth edition of Hudson Palisades Trails is likely to be available in May, so be sure to look for its arrival on our website or sign up for our e-newsletter to stay in the know!

Thank You

Special thanks to the volunteers and park partners who helped produce this map revision!



YOUR PLANNED GIFT TO THE TRAIL CONFERENCE WILL:

- Help us protect trails and trail lands for future generations.
- Preserve people's connection to the natural world.
- Create a personal sense of responsibility for our wild places.

Please consider including the Trail Conference in your will or as a beneficiary in an investment account or insurance policy today.

You can make a bequest by sharing the following sample language with your attorney:

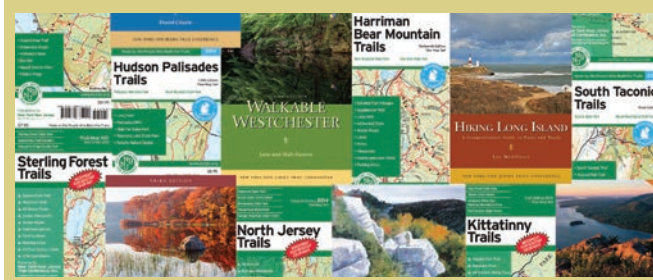
I bequeath to the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference, Inc., a not-for-profit organization, with principal offices located at 600 Ramapo Valley Rd, Mahwah, NJ 07430, the sum of \$_____ (or _____%) for its general unrestricted environmental conservation purposes.

TO LEARN MORE AND GET MATERIALS, CONTACT:

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dweise@nynjtc.org | 201.512.9348 x813

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Trail Conference Marketplace: Featured Items



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This one-size-fits-all trucker hat features an embroidered Trail Conference logo with trail tools. Get yours for \$21.85 (\$19.66 for members).

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This comfy shirt is great on and off the trail, and allows you to show your Trail Conference pride with a simple, eye-catching design. Available in black and gray for \$18.75 (\$16.87 for members). Find these products and more at nynjtc.org/shop.



Explore New Trails and Parkland in Orange County



SONA MASON
WEST HUDSON
PROGRAM COORDINATOR

The Trail Conference has been busy improving public access in and around Goosepond Mountain State Park in Orange County, N.Y., over the last year. Thanks to the efforts of our volunteers, a precarious road-walk section of the Highlands Trail in Chester has been rerouted into the park. Approximately 2 miles long, this new section is a beautiful, well-graded multi-use trail, built for use by hikers and non-motorized bikes.

The Highlands Trail at Goosepond Mountain has a lot to offer over a relatively short distance. One can travel from the parking lot at Bull Mill Road to Laroe Road for an approximately 3-mile hike, or continue along Lazy Hill Road to the parking at Route 17M for an approximately 5-mile hike (both are out-and-back or two-car shuttle options).

FEATURED HIKE

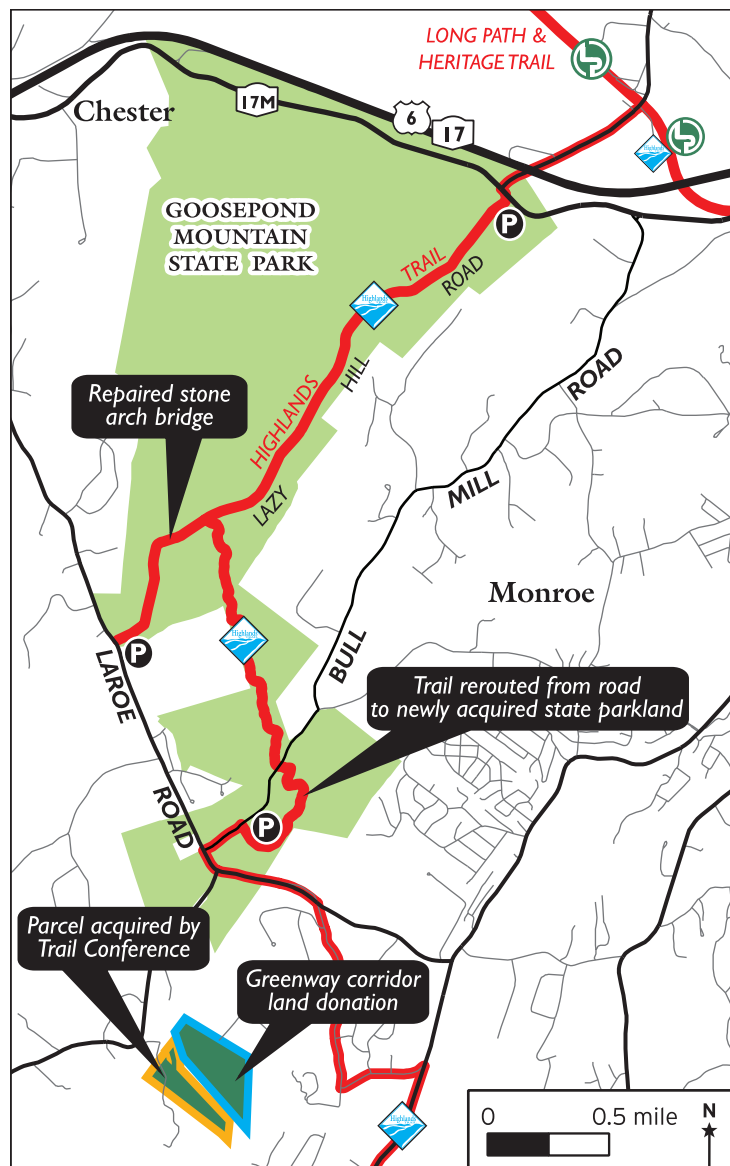
Details

- ▶ **Trail:** Highlands Trail
- ▶ **Park:** Goosepond Mountain State Park, Orange County, N.Y.
- ▶ **Difficulty:** Moderate
- ▶ **Length:** Varies
- ▶ **Dogs:** Allowed on leash
- ▶ **Features:** Views, bikes allowed

which overlook the wetlands of Trout Brook. Contemplate the stream at the bend before continuing uphill toward a spectacular overlook of Sugar Loaf Mountain. Continue through aromatic red cedar outcrops down to Bull Mill Road. Cross the road, then hop over the Seely Brook stepping stone crossing and bog bridge walkway. Head northward through more cedars, past massive, old field-grown oaks and along hillsides down toward the original trail route on Lazy Hill Road.

Here you can turn left, across the newly restored Seely Brook bridge to the Laroe Road parking. If you head right toward route 17M instead, keep an eye out for the unmarked entrance on the left to the Board Family Cemetery Trail. This semi-circular loop leads to a bench on a knoll overlooking the vast, open wetlands below Goosepond Mountain. Take a seat on the bench, inhale deeply, and let the birdsong fill your ears.

For either option, start at the parking lot on Bull Mill Road near the corner of Laroe Road. Follow the blue diamond Highlands Trail blazes along an avenue of grand sycamores,



More Land Preserved in Chester

Inspired by the recent parcel preservation activity in Chester, Stanley Felsing, former owner of Camp Monroe, recently donated more than 30 acres along the proposed greenway corridor to the Town of Chester. Stanley said it was done "to show our appreciation for the 60

years we lived in Chester and operated Camp Monroe. Our goal was to assist in helping to connect a piece of the Highlands Trail and to make sure that the area around the Trail would remain free of development." Stanley and his wife Hope said they were happy to "leave a small legacy showing our gratitude for the many wonderful years we spent living in beautiful Chester among our dear neighbors."

On Saturday, April 21 (rain date Sunday, April 22), we're officially opening the Highlands Trail relocation at Goosepond Mountain State Park with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. The festivities begin at 2 p.m. Join us in celebrating the

partnership of public, non-profit, and private groups who have worked steadily over a period of years to preserve a beautiful patch of forested land from development—land that is now part of Goosepond Mountain State Park, and

now accessible to the public via trails built by volunteers. This trail party and hike will take place at the Highlands Trail parking area at 2-164 Bull Mill Road in Chester, N.Y. Find more info and RSVP at bit.ly/tc-hto18.

Support trails, parks, and open space in the region by joining the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference.

Trail Conference BENEFITS

The Trail Conference maintains more than 2,100 miles of trails, advocates for parks, protects open space, and provides volunteer service opportunities in the great outdoors.

Your membership supports the trails you love and gives you these additional benefits:

25% Discount on Trail Conference books and maps when purchased directly from the Trail Conference. Get a 10% discount on Trail Conference logo goods. Visit nynjtc.org/shop.

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We maintain more than 2,100 miles of trails. Your membership helps us provide access to open space for everyone.

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