



CONSERVATION CORPS

Trail Steward Report

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Minnewaska State Park Preserve

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Introduction

The Trail Conference Conservation Corps Trail Stewards worked with Minnewaska State Park Preserve and Sam's Point Preserve from August through October, helping to mitigate some of the negative impacts of increased use in these parks. Over 13 days, the Trail Stewards traveled to various worksites within Minnewaska to work alongside park staff, interns, and volunteers to build, maintain, and rehabilitate the trails and surrounding areas. These trail maintenance days in conjunction with their trail stewarding is what helped make the Trail Stewards experience and expertise so multifaceted.



A view from Minnewaska State Park Preserve



The Trail Stewards, Sam's Point staff, and SCA interns with NY State Parks Commissioner Erik Kulleseid



Meet The Crew



Josh Nussenfeld
Crew Member



Brandon Elgun
Crew Member



Chiara Brady
Crew Leader



Liam Stuart
Crew Member



Amanda Clark
Crew Member



RAINBOW FALLS FOOTPATH

On the Trail Stewards' first official workdays at Minnewaska State Park Preserve, they hiked the Rainbow Falls Footpath to assist park staff in creating drainage systems to prevent erosion. These two days, August 11th and 12th, were spent digging drainage channels, sourcing rocks to use as crush and bridges, and brushing in areas hikers walked to avoid flooded trail.

Between these two days, the Trail Stewards also got the amazing opportunity to camp overnight at the Peter's Kill area and experience Minnewaska much more intimately. Overall these two days were a great introduction to the work that the stewards would be doing for the next three months at the preserve.





Using teamwork to move a rock



One of the rocks to be used as a bridge



One of the bridge rocks in place



INFORMAL TRAILS

Many of the days that the Trail Stewards spent at Minnewaska involved working on the various informal or "social" trails made by park visitors throughout the preserve.

Social trails are unofficial walking paths created by visitors, usually to act as shortcuts. The paths have the potential, though, to cause erosion and disruption to delicate ecosystems.

For these reasons, the stewards were tasked with the job of brushing in these social trails. The crew found logs, branches, rocks, leaves, and anything in between to make these paths look as unappealing as possible to hikers looking to veer off-trail.





Checking out the view from Gertrude's Nose



Trail Steward Liam carrying tools from a worksite



The Trail Stewards used logs, sticks, and other debris to block off the entrance to this social trail



FOREST FIRE RESPONSE

Facing three wild fires during the months of August and September, Minnewaska State Park Preserve closed its gates to the public. During this time, the stewards stepped in as "Forest Fire Stewards" to assist park staff and emergency responders by educating and redirecting visitors away from the various park entrances.

In following weeks, both at Minnewaska and Sam's Point, the crew would continue to assist with fire damage response, tending to some of the areas that saw the most damage from the fire mitigation strategy.





Surveying some of the burned areas



The edge of the burn area at Smiley Carriage Rd



Crew Leader Chiara at the Peter's Kill entrance, ready to assist and direct traffic during the park closure



SAM'S POINT

Starting in September, the Trail Stewards began to work closely with Sam's Point park staff and SCA interns to accomplish several long-term projects at the Sam's Point Area of Minnewaska State Park Preserve.

Over the course of five work days spent at Sam's Point, the stewards were able to create several drainage systems on social trails and fire damage paths around the park to prevent further damage and erosion. They then brushed those paths in to discourage further harm.





Before and after photos of the work site the Trail Stewards helped restore in Sam's Point



Amanda carrying a tool to the worksite



Thank you!

The New York-New Jersey Trail Conference Trail Steward Program is going strong and looking forward to another successful season in 2023. Thank you to our partners and volunteers for all of your support. We would not be able to do it without you.

Please feel free to email Trail Steward Program Coordinator Myra Romano (mromano@nynjtc.org) with any questions or comments on how we can continue to improve the program.