



TRAIL WALKER

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

Growing Park Visitation Increases Our Commitment to Great Trail Experiences

For more than a decade, land managers and environmental organizations have been debating how to solve one of the biggest threats to the integrity of our public lands: increasingly high visitation. In 2020, at the height of a pandemic that prompted more people than ever to find relaxation and refuge in nature, the issue seemed to reach its tipping point.

As literal and figurative trailblazers in environmental conservation for 100 years, the Trail Conference has taken a leadership role in coordinating stewardship efforts to keep up with the challenges of high use and misuse. There is no one answer to solve these issues; it is our belief that we can create better outdoor experiences through user education, public participation, and sustainable, on-the-ground solutions.

Here's a look at where we're focusing efforts this season:

More efficient recruitment and onboarding = more volunteer power

When in-person activities were suspended in 2020, we pivoted to online volunteer recruitment and training. We created engaging digital content that allowed us to reach more people than we ever imagined possible. That resulted in more volunteers trained and assigned to more positions than ever before.

Our volunteer ranks remain steady this season, meaning there are more people caring for the region's trails and natural areas just as these places are seeing more visitors. Additionally, our increased efforts to recruit volunteer leaders and implement new, more extensive training processes are



JESSE JOHNSON AND MATT SCHNEIDER

The Trail Conference is playing a leading role in finding solutions to the challenges associated with more people exploring trails such as those on Breakneck Ridge, pictured.

also paying off, which results in a better experience for both our volunteers and those who enjoy the trails and parks under our care.

Emphasis on user education and outreach

You'll be seeing more Trail Conference Stewards in more places this year, which will allow us to engage, one-on-one, with more people looking for a safe, enjoyable experience outdoors. Our Conservation Corps Stewards are serving at Breakneck Ridge in Hudson Highlands State Park Preserve, on the Appalachian Trail at Bear Mountain State Park, at the Croton Gorge Unique Area in Westchester County, on several summits in the Catskills, and at Gertrude's Nose and

Verkeerderkill Falls in Minnewaska State Park Preserve. You'll find our volunteer Stewards stationed at the Ashokan Rail Trail in the Catskills, and in Hudson Highlands and Fahnestock state parks. Partners whose own Stewards have received training by the Trail Conference include New York State Parks, Rockland Conservation & Service Corps, and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

That "face time" on the trail allows Stewards to provide helpful outreach and information about park regulations, hiker safety, preparedness, and other best practices. In addition to readying hikers, Stewards help discourage and mitigate misuse of trails and the surrounding lands. This

year, that includes trail maintenance trips and creating an educational video series.

Smart expansion

When we look to expand our stewardship efforts, we look for the projects that will have the most positive impact on both the public and the land. This year, we're expanding trail construction work in Morris County, N.J., with the addition of a dedicated Conservation Corps crew. And our Ecological Stewardship programs continue to offer more volunteer opportunities to help preserve native ecosystems: The volunteer-led New Jersey Invasives Strike Force will work its first full season combatting invasives in the Garden State, while volunteer surveyors for

spotted lanternfly got their first training this spring.

Finding solutions together

To truly serve the natural areas of the greater New York metropolitan area, we must work together with the other agencies and partners doing the work that continues to sustain open space in this region. The Trail Conference is proud to be a founding member of the New York Outdoor Recreation Coalition (NYORC). Members of the statewide NYORC are committed to building a more equitable outdoors through investment and being an active participant in creating welcoming spaces for historically marginalized and underrepresented communities. Through our participation in NYORC, we are stakeholders in the Open Spaces for All initiative spearheaded by the Open Space Institute. The overarching goal of this effort is to identify innovative policies, programs, initiatives, and creative partnerships to support and engage a growing and increasingly diverse constituency of park users. Further, this plan will support the evolution of the state's services, offerings, and operations to equitably meet these needs and demands. The Trail Conference also continues to serve on Gov. Andrew Cuomo's Catskill Advisory Group, a strategic planning advisory group that is developing a framework to help balance public use needs in the Catskills, as well as on the New Jersey Trails Council.

With the help of our partners and supporters, we aim to gain greater investment in our mission so we can tackle whatever challenges we face this year—and for the next 100 years.

WHAT'S INSIDE:



Trails for People: Volunteers in Action
pages 6-7

The Latest on Lyme Disease: Bills Aim to Fund Awareness, Research
page 9

Conservation Corps Crews Preview Trail & Park Improvements
page 8



Mark Your Calendars! Trail Events Not to Miss
pages 2, 3

You're Invited to Our Centennial Gala

One hundred years ago, the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference was founded by outdoor-lovers who believed the weariness of fast-paced, modern life could be cured by a walk in the woods. Today, the demand for outdoor recreation is at an all-time high as people turn to nature to relax and recharge after an extremely challenging year.

Since 1920, the Trail Conference has been a literal and figurative trailblazer in the conservation movement. Every time our volunteers step

on a trail, they are embodying the values of an organization that strives to provide safe, enjoyable opportunities outdoors and inspire a deeper appreciation for the care that natural areas require.

We invite you to join us at our Centennial Gala on October 16 at the Bear Mountain Inn to celebrate this legacy of service—100 years of empowering people to connect with nature and protect the land they love. To mark this milestone, we will be honoring Dr. Lucy Rockefeller Waletzky—

philanthropist, environmentalist, and longtime Trail Conference champion.

Our program will include live entertainment, a three-course meal, and local drinks. Following all New York State health guidelines and protocols, tickets will be limited and safety precautions will be in place.

Mark your calendars and visit nynjtc.org/events for full details and to RSVP.

We are moved by nature; we are united by trails. We hope to see you there!



Celebrating Trails Day, Every Day

Since 1920, the Trail Conference has been known as the “doers” in connecting people with nature. In celebration of National Trails Day this year, we honored those who have contributed to our trail construction and maintenance legacy with webinars and guided hikes to visit recent project sites. We also asked our trail community to help ensure our volunteers and

Corps members have what they need to get the job done by donating to our Trail Building & Maintenance Fund—and you made a huge impact! Thanks to your donations, we raised over \$21,000 to support the planning, construction, and restoration of thousands of miles of trails—trails that empower people across the region to explore the outdoors.

We are grateful for the gen-

erosity of Georg Budenbender and Dr. Katy Elwyn, who donated a campaign match, and to Mark Perreault, who saw the early enthusiasm for our National Trails Day challenge and offered a gift to extend the match. Our thanks to all who invested in protecting healthy trail systems!

For more info on the Trail Building & Maintenance Fund, visit bit.ly/tc-sop.

Welcome, New Board Members

New Board members Deanna Culbreath and Mary Ann Villari were appointed to the Trail Conference Board of Directors in April.

Deanna Culbreath was elevated to head coach of Sarah Lawrence College's men's and women's cross-country teams in 2017. She previously served as assistant coach upon her arrival in 2013. An avid trail runner, Deanna's many accomplishments include back-to-back runner-up finishes at the USATF Trail 100 Mile National Championship (2012 and 2013), as well as back-to-back wins (2012, 2013), including a course record, at the Paine to Pain Trail Half Marathon.

Mary Ann Villari is a lifelong hiker, skier, and



fledgling gardener. Mary Ann holds a BA from Bowdoin College and a

JD from Boston University Law School. After practicing corporate real estate law for many years in New York City, Mary Ann served as Chief Operating Officer and General Counsel for Broadway Housing Communities, a not-for-profit organization that provides supportive and affordable housing for low-income adults and families. Over two decades, she led the development of hundreds of units of housing, two early childhood centers, and a new cultural institution, including the Sugar Hill Project in Washington Heights. Mary Ann served on the Board of Trustees of Bowdoin College and is currently a member of the Finance and Governance committees of the Trail Conference.



Earth Day Gratitude

This Earth Day, we came together as a trail community to make a powerful stand for safe, enjoyable access to nature and its protection, both now and for future generations. Healthy ecosystems deserve sustainable trails and responsible

visitors; we aim to ensure our experiences outdoors allow nature to thrive. Thanks to your support, we raised over \$37,000 to protect parks and trails. Special thanks to our two anonymous donors and Cereus Financial Advisors, LLC, who provided the generous match for this campaign. We are so grateful for your generosity!

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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
DIRECTORMoved by Nature.
United by Trails.

By now, our Moved by Nature, United by Trails slogan has come through your inbox once or twice and you've seen it in a couple previous Trail Walkers. I have heard so many positive responses to this messaging. It has resonated with our members, volunteers, staff, and supporters. When I reflect on my outdoor life and the world



that we all live in, I questioned if this slogan is accurate. Are we really united by trails? What does "moved by nature" mean? The more I thought about this idea and challenged the no-

tion, the clearer my thoughts became. When we have such stark divides between red and blue or black and white, the idea that the natural world—the places where trails exist without bias or preference to who uses them—needs to become a sanctuary. The idea that trails can unite us is an aspiration. It is the destination that we strive for.

Trail Conference stalwarts, our longtime members and volunteers, are believers. For 100 years, they have ignored

their differences and concentrated on their similarities: being moved by nature.

Life is not static. The world we live in is constantly changing, as are the faces of the people we see heading out to enjoy nature. Many of these new visitors are not looking to climb the highest peaks or hike the longest trails. The world of social media and technology has now exposed most of the "hidden gems" that trail lovers and outdoor enthusiasts have enjoyed alone for years to the masses. However, as

veteran lovers of the outdoors, it is our responsibility to be welcoming ambassadors for those who are now starting their journey on being moved by nature.

It is not our mission to solve society's woes. However, if by painting blazes, clipping branches, and offering a smile to someone we see on a trail can help, then yes: It's time we are united by trails.

Joshua Howard
Executive Director
executivedirector@nynjtc.org

A.T. Vista Event Honors Benton MacKaye's Vision

The Trail Conference invites everyone with a love of trails to help celebrate 100 years of Appalachian Trail history during the inaugural A.T. Vista—a hybrid virtual/live event that will be held August 7 and 8.

This year is the 100th anniversary of Benton MacKaye's 1921 article, "An Appalachian Trail: A Project in Regional Planning," which sparked the movement to build the trail. Trail Conference volunteers built the very first section of the Appalachian Trail, through Harriman-Bear Mountain state parks in New York.

Our organization will be hosting both the 2021 A.T. Vista and next year's event at the State University of New York (SUNY) at New Paltz, slated for August 5-8, 2022. The A.T. Vista events are the reimagining of the A.T. Bi-

ennial, last held in Maine in 2017. A.T. Vista aims to be recognized as the forum for engagement of all who cherish the future of the Appalachian Trail's protection, stewardship, and connection of the human spirit with nature while increasing participation from younger and diverse members.

During this year's A.T. Vista, guided hikes all along the A.T. and on nearby trails will be open to all to join in the fun on both August 7 and 8. You'll also have the opportunity to "hike your own hike" along the trail of your choice. Virtual components will include webinars and the opportunity to share your photos and stories on our social media feeds.

For details and to sign up for the Vista newsletter and events, visit atvista2021.org. The website also includes info on volunteer opportunities and other ways to get involved.



CHRISTIAN MENA

In Memoriam

LISA AUSTIN MUELLER

Lisa Austin Mueller passed away on April 19. She dedicated her life to service to others. This passion began when she worked at a retirement community before graduating from Pearl River High School and led her to earn a master of social work from Fordham University. She spent her career caring for elderly people in Rockland and Orange counties, and after her retirement, continued to do so as a volunteer for the Friendly Visitor Program in Warwick, N.Y. Lisa's second passion was nature, which led her to earn a bachelor of arts in Environmental Sciences from SUNY Purchase. She loved hiking, cycling, canoeing, gardening, and especially her cats. She maintained the Bluebird Trail at Storm King State Park. She will be missed.



FRANK PELOSO

Frank Peloso, 70, passed away peacefully at home surrounded by his loving family on April 2. A lifelong resident of New Jersey, Frank met his wife Mary Jane at Glassboro State College and then received his masters in education from Seton Hall University. He had a 34-year career in education in the Newark School District. Frank was dedicated to education, inspiring his students as well as everyone he met. He was a family man—proud of the accomplishments of his daughter Gina and always up for hosting family gatherings. Frank was an avid outdoorsman with a special love for nature, gardening, hiking, and birdwatching. Frank and Mary Jane were maintainers of the Spring Lake Trail in Swartswood State Park. He will be missed.



JEREMY AFGAR

Annual Trail-a-Thon 100-Mile Challenge Kicks Off Sept. 13

Trails give us so much: from respite to adventure to a pathway toward physical, mental, and emotional health. Our Second Annual Trail-a-Thon, running Sept. 13 through Oct. 31, is a chance to support sustainable trails and healthy parks. Explore a favorite park, try out a new trail, take a lap around your neighborhood, or even hit a treadmill! While ticking off your miles, you'll also have the opportunity to raise money for the Trail Conference and protect the land you love in the process. Last year's inaugural event was a huge success! This year's Trail-a-Thon will help raise awareness and financial support for our mission into our second century.

Registration to accept the 100-mile challenge opens August 31. This allows each participant time to set up a personal fundraising page, join a virtual team, and share your reason for accepting this challenge. The official challenge is 100 miles, but that doesn't mean you can't do more—or less! The Trail-a-Thon is about getting outdoors, connecting with nature, and celebrating the Trail Conference's 100 years of service. Trail-a-Thon participants are encouraged to reach out to family, friends, and colleagues to support your efforts in making an impact. Interested in joining as a corporate team or becoming a sponsor? Email jzack@nynjtc.org.

Staff Update

Welcome, Paula!

Paula Sandusky joined the finance team as the Finance & Operations Assistant this spring. She enjoyed a long career in hospitality with roles in information technology and operations and more recently as general manager at the Stony Point Center. As a transplant from Boston, Paula has enjoyed exploring Hudson Valley rail trails on her bike, beaches from Long Island to the Jersey Shore, and hiking paths from Norvin Green to the Catskills. She is a proud North Rockland community member, having raised three (now young adult) children there. She works to stay grounded in the practice of yoga and practices escapism as an avid baseball fan.



Happy Trails, Kylie!

Kylie Yang is leaving the Trail Conference to join the Continental Divide Trail Coalition as Field Programs Manager. She first began working for the Trail Conference in 2018, serving as a New Jersey Appalachian Trail Ridgerunner. She spent two seasons maintaining trails and shelters, assisting the West Jersey Crew, and educating hikers on Leave No Trace before being hired full-time as New Jersey Program Coordinator. We wish Kylie all the best on her next adventure!



Support for Our Work Creates Better Experiences in Nature

Thanks to the following organizations and foundations for supporting the work of the Trail Conference in 2021.

TRAIL AND SUMMIT STEWARD PROGRAM

Trail Conference Stewards are ambassadors for the safe and responsible enjoyment of nature. Our Stewards have been bringing face-to-face user education and sustainable, on-the-ground solutions to some of the region's most popular outdoor destinations since 2013.

We are grateful for the generosity of those who have made this year's Trail Steward season possible:

- ▶ Hudson Highlands Land Trust
- ▶ John and Frank Sparacio Charitable Foundation
- ▶ Shelby Cullom Davis Charitable Fund, Inc.
- ▶ Town of Cortlandt
- ▶ Village of Croton-on-Hudson
- ▶ Mountain Tops Outfitters
- ▶ Town of Ossining
- ▶ Department of Environmental Conservation
- ▶ Thomas Campanile
- ▶ Diane Alden
- ▶ Parks & Trails New York
- ▶ Office of Children and Family Services AmeriCorps Program
- ▶ Catskill 3500 Club
- ▶ Catskill Mountain Club
- ▶ Private Donors

NEW JERSEY TRAIL STEWARDSHIP

The Trail Conference is grateful for the support of the **Dodge Foundation** to help us connect the people of New Jersey with nature, engage volunteers in stewardship of public land, protect open space, and improve public access to trails. The grant is an invest-



The Trail Steward Program helps to ensure hikers in the Catskills and other popular areas are prepared for their trip and understand Leave No Trace principles.

ment in our shared goal of improving the quality of life in communities and creating better outdoor opportunities for all New Jerseyans.

Our thanks goes to **Orange & Rockland/Rockland Electric** for a grant supporting trail construction and improvements throughout popular parks in New Jersey, including Ramapo Reservation, Ramapo Mountain State Forest, and Norvin Green State Forest. This gift also allows us to improve trails, signage, and promotion of the Highlands Trail in the O&R service area.

CREATING AN INCLUSIVE OUTDOORS

As the Trail Conference enters

its second century of service, the demands on trails and the impacts users are having on the natural areas surrounding trails has grown tremendously.

We will be enhancing our efforts to ensure that open spaces are not only protected for people to enjoy, but also more accessible. The Trail Conference is grateful for the continued funding from **REI** and a grant to support our **BOOTS** (Better Outdoor Opportunities Through Stewardship) program. With REI's partnership, we will work to ensure that barriers to outdoor recreation are identified and real action is implemented.

One of the most significant projects in this effort is our in-

volvement in the Open Spaces for All initiative. Through our participation on the steering committee of the New York Outdoor Recreation Coalition (NYORC), we received a grant from the **Samuel Freeman Charitable Trust** to support the development of strategic priorities for improving and enhancing equity, access, and inclusion in New York State's park and open space system. In partnership with the Open Space Institute, it is our goal through NYORC for this initiative to advance the state's commitment to making parks and open spaces more inclusive, welcoming, and accessible while protecting land and improving access and management for recreational uses.

WELCH TRAIL EDUCATION CENTER

In partnership with the Palisades Interstate Park Commission, the Trail Conference has been using the rustic Welch Trail Education Center in Harriman State Park to house crews working in the area for more than a decade. In 2019, we received a matching grant from the New York State Environmental Protection Fund Grant Program for Parks, Preservation, and Heritage to not only restore, but also expand the camp for educational purposes. The grant covers some, but not all, of the funding. Thanks to a generous donation by **Pete Heckler**, vital needs of restoring this historic camp, as well as the construction of a new classroom building that will be used for Conservation Corps, volunteer, and staff training, can continue to progress.

Subaru Shows Commitment to Great Trails

Subaru is committed to giving back to local charities and doing their part to protect the environment. That philanthropic spirit is helping to fuel the training and support of Trail Conference volunteers this season.

Liberty Family of Dealerships Shares the Love

During Subaru of America's annual Share the Love event, Liberty Subaru in Emerson, N.J., once again named the Trail Conference as a Hometown Charity. From mid-November through the beginning of January, for every new vehicle purchased or leased at Liberty Subaru, \$250 was donated to the charity designated by each buyer/lessee.

Additionally, the owners of the Liberty Family of Dealerships decided to "share



Through the Share the Love event, Liberty Subaru donated more than \$47,000 to the Trail Conference mission.

the love" at Liberty Hyundai and Genesis in Mahwah, and Liberty Kia in Ramsey. When Trail Conference members bought or leased a new car from the Liberty Family of Dealerships and selected us as their charity of choice, Liberty donated \$250 to our efforts.

Thanks to the generosity of the Liberty Family of Dealerships and our Trail Family, more than \$47,000 was donated to the Trail Conference. Our thanks to Liberty and everyone who chooses to support the Trail Conference mission!

Subaru Distributors Corp. Sponsors Trail University Workshops

Subaru Distributors Corp. has been named the official sponsor of our 2021 Trail University program. Bringing stewardship learning opportunities to a trailhead near you, our Trail University workshops include topics like introduction to trail maintenance, intro to trail construction, invasive plant identification, and much more. Subaru's funding of Trail University allows us to recruit and train more volunteers, resulting in a larger and better trained workforce on the ground. Thanks to Subaru Distributors Corp. for their generous sponsorship, which allows us to equip the next generation of outdoor lovers with the knowledge they need to protect natural areas and make great trail experiences possible.

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So That Future Generations May Have Trails to Explore

The Trail Conference is fortunate to have dedicated benefactors supporting its mission, including many who have chosen to secure its future through planned gifts. To express our appreciation for this committed group of donors who have remembered the Trail Conference in their estate plan, we established the Trail Angel Society. Members of this special group share the common bond of generosity and vision to ensure that the trails and natural areas we share are sustainable and accessible for all to enjoy for generations to come.

Trail Conference Life Member, current Board member, and environmental activist Sue Barbuto reflects on why she has chosen to become a Trail Angel:

“My parents raised us to believe in contributing, in many ways, to our communities and the institutions that benefit us all. They believed that the generations before us invested and planned for what we use



Board member Sue Barbuto, right, became a Trail Angel “to ensure that future generations have the same great trail experiences that I have had.”

and enjoy today—be that libraries, hospitals, or parks. The Trail Conference represents that kind of ‘institution’ and ‘infrastructure’ to me. More than 100 years ago, foresighted hikers and nature lovers started to preserve and maintain

land and trails so that I and others could enjoy their dream of access to the outdoors today. We are certainly at a crossroads—pun intended—in our area when support for trails and everyone’s access to them has been heightened, thanks

to the pandemic. Becoming a Trail Angel is my effort to continue long-term financial support to an organization that has been preserving and maintaining the beautiful nature and local trails that I have enjoyed and hiked over many years.

My commitment will ensure that future generations have the same great trail experiences that I have had throughout my lifetime.”

We invite you to join Sue and others who share your passion for nature by becoming a member of the Trail Angel Society. Simply submit the non-binding form below or at nynjtc.org/trail_angel.

A Renewed Bequest Challenge

Over the last two years, Robert C. Ross has inspired our trail family to ensure the longevity and financial stability of the Trail Conference by becoming Trail Angels. Believing in the importance and power of “paying it forward,” Robert has recommitted to our Bequest Challenge and will contribute \$500 of “new” funds to the Trail Conference when someone indicates that he or she has made a bequest or a provision in their estate plan that benefits the Trail Conference.

Your bequest intention form is non-binding; people can change their minds as their circumstances change. The form is to show that you are making plans now, but you have every right to change them later. If you’ve included the Trail Conference in your estate plan or plan to do so, use this form to let us know: nynjtc.org/trail_angel. Even if you’ve told us previously, we can benefit now from our generous donor. Just fill out the form and take advantage of this exciting Bequest Challenge.

Yes, I Want to be a Trail Angel!

Confidential Pledge Challenge Form

I am pleased to inform you that I have named the **New York-New Jersey Trail Conference** as a beneficiary of my estate plan. I understand that this is a non-binding statement. Although I intend this gift to remain in force, this document does not constitute a legally binding pledge.

Name _____ Phone _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Email _____ DOB _____
 Signature _____ Date _____

I understand that this future gift entitles me to membership in the Trail Angel Society and that the membership list may be published in Trail Conference publications and website. However, the nature and size of my intention, as well as the names of anonymous donors, will be kept confidential.

Kindly return this completed form to: Development Director, Planned Giving, NY-NJ Trail Conference, 600 Ramapo Valley Road, Mahwah, NJ 07430
 Please contact us with any questions: 201.512.9348 x813, dweise@nynjtc.org

My future gift:

- Is _____ percent of my estate worth approximately \$ _____
- Is in the specific amount of \$ _____
- Is an amount I would prefer to keep private.

This is my best estimate at this time and the amount of my future gift may be different.

Trail Angel Society:

- Please list me publicly as a member of the Society. My name should appear as _____
- Please DO NOT list my Society membership publicly. I prefer to remain anonymous.

TRAIL CONFERENCE SUPPORTERS

The Trail Conference’s mission is made possible through generous support from hundreds of individuals, companies, and foundations—outdoor-lovers like you who care for the environment.

In an effort to reduce our paper impacts, our full supporter list will begin appearing in the annual edition of the Winter Trail Walker. Donations of \$50-plus made in honor or in memory of friends and family will continue to appear in each quarterly Trail Walker.

Thank you for your generosity and passion for trails and natural areas—thanks for your support of the Trail Conference!

TRIBUTES February 1, 2020 - April 30, 2021

- In honor of Susan and Joe Barbuto*
Don Weise
- In honor of Brent Boscarino*
Poughkeepsie Public Library
- In honor of Kay Cynamon*
Richard Spola
- In honor of Melissa Glynn*
Tammy Juco

- In honor of Cathie Swyka and Steve Goldberg*
Cynthia Seibels and John Kolp
- In honor of John and Marianne Gunzler*
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Memorial Charitable Fund
- In honor of Aaron Guttentplan*
ANn Bontempo
- In honor of Palisades MTB*
Shepard Grinker
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- Michael Peloso
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Kelsey Williams
Linda Williams
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Kristine Zboray
Michael Zboray
Diane Zelesnikar
- In memory of Norman Reicher*
Jody-Lynn Reicher
- In memory of Warren Rosner*
Bob Gurian

PEOPLE FOR TRAILS TRAILS FOR PEOPLE

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

Generous Donor Funds East Hudson Trail Tramps Projects



MARILYN BLAHO
CREW MEMBER
CONNIE STERN
CREW LEADER

The Westchester Trail Tramps, a Trail Conference volunteer crew founded by Mary Dodds over 10 years ago, have focused on restoring and renewing the Briarcliff Peekskill Trail (BPT) since January 2020. The BPT became a priority after crew leaders Michael Pashley and Connie Stern walked the trail from Watch Hill Road to Ryder Road, about 9 miles. They encountered several nearly impassable sections covered with blowdowns and brush. The entire trail needed action to restore this linear corridor to Trail Conference standards: making it inviting to hikers, protective to the environment, and within their resources. They knew they had an able crew of talented Trail Tramps at the ready. But to tackle projects beyond the reblazing and overgrowth clearing—bigger projects such as rebuilding board-

walks, for example—would require expenditures as well as physical labor.

When Mark Perreault, an out-of-state visiting hiker, happened to walk the BPT, he was impressed by the trail “because it is outside the mold of a typical hiking trail, running through a mixed area of towns ... originally intended as a highway, but preserved as a walking path by Westchester County.” But he was concerned about its deteriorated condition. He then offered the funding to make the improvements happen; he contacted local agencies and the Trail Conference, who then contacted Michael and Connie. “We immediately responded,” Connie says. “We told him of our plans to rehab the trail.” The funding assured, the next step was to inform Westchester County Parks Division, who heartily approved their plans. Michael and Connie accepted the challenge and set the Tramps to work.

Meanwhile, COVID-19 halted trail work. Trail

Thank you

Thanks to the Trail Tramps: Co-leaders Michael Pashley and Connie Stern; members Mary Ayers, Marilyn Blaho, Rose Bonanno, Jane Daniels, Walt Daniels, Stuart Faust, Bob Gurian, Phil Heidelberg, Dave Margulies, Mary Anne Massey, Helen Pashley, Martha Rabson, Fred Stern, Steven Russ, Ken Whalen.

Tramps continued planning via Zoom sessions until, masked and socially distanced, they began carrying out the plans in June 2020.

The most ambitious of the projects was to construct a boardwalk spanning a water-filled marsh, restoring the old and adding additional lengths. Michael calculated the amount of lumber and supplies they would need and designed the boardwalk’s course. “With Mark’s



generous funding,” Michael says, “we were able to order the needed lumber and have it delivered nearby.”

One hundred sixty feet of new boardwalk was produced, along with the repair of about 80 feet, giving hikers a high and dry path while protecting the sensitive plants and wildlife habitats from incursions when hikers attempted to bypass standing water and mud.

During the construction,

hikers admired the work and thanked the crew for their efforts. The new additions were not just functional, but also landscape-friendly, meandering through beautiful parkland with fresh blazing and clear tread throughout.

Having wrapped up that project, the Trail Tramps look forward to improving additional wet and eroded areas of the BPT while continuing maintenance of the entire trail.

West Jersey Crew: Keeping Feet Dry and Trails Safe

This spring, the West Jersey Trail Crew got off to a busy start. So far, we have installed two larger stone-step stream crossings on the Deep Root Trail in Stokes State Forest, as well as several smaller ones along the way. Then it was more step-stones along the Stony Brook Trail in Stokes, and servicing and installing water bars and drains on the Appalachian Trail in Worthington State Forest. In High Point State Park, the crew rerouted a section of the Mashipacong Trail from a badly eroded road drain to a more sustainable, walkable alignment. In Jenny Jump State Park, we created a new extension to the Orchard Trail, facilitating its role in the new Solar Walk recently installed in



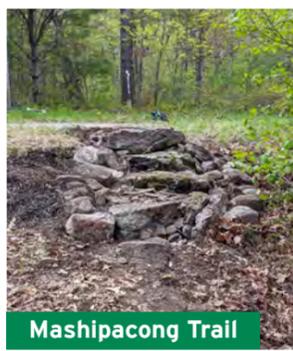
Deep Root Trail

LISA HALTOVIC

the park by the adjacent amateur astronomy club.

We’ll be working through June; email us at westjerseycrew@trailstobuild.com or contact volunteer@nynjtc.org if you’re interested.

Come have fun playing in the dirt! Monica & David Day, Crew Leaders



Mashipacong Trail

NANCY DIVINSKI



Connecting with Local Hikers at Trail Days

In May, volunteers Moe Lemire, David Hans, Greg Calabrese, and Barbara DeLade drove 670 miles through the night to Damascus, Va., to celebrate and promote the Trail Conference’s work along the Appalachian Trail at the 34th annual Trail Days festival. Our main message to current thru-hikers, past thru-hikers, and A.T. lovers was Protect the Land You Love. We educated

festival-goers on Leave No Trace principles and explained how the Trail Conference built the first section of the A.T. We also talked about trail maintenance and corridor monitoring.

We connected regional hikers to their home states’ trail club and recruited a bunch of new volunteers from New York and New Jersey to give back when they finish their hike. We had 700 visitors to our booth. It was great to represent the Trail Conference!

Moe Lemire

Run Wild and Trail Conference Explore, Preserve Gunks' Quiet Side

The quietly spectacular southern Shawangunk Ridge passes through many newly preserved parks and forests such as Shawangunk Ridge, Roosa Gap, Wurtsboro, Huckleberry Ridge and Gobbler's Knob. Run Wild, Inc. and the Trail Conference's running group, Trail Conference Trail Runs, recently met to explore and celebrate the preservation of

a section of Gobbler's Knob State Forest. A total of 117 acres has been preserved here, permanently protecting the Shawangunk Ridge Trail, moving it off the roads and into the forest.

The group gathered to learn about the Trail Conference's ongoing work on the ridge, and Run Wild's recent gift of \$11,000 to preserve a section

of Gobbler's Knob. Hikers and runners got to explore the preserved greenway, visiting rocky outcrops, deep woods, and scenic views of the Bashakill. Run Wild partners with the Trail Conference and other organizations to raise funds for land conservation, through running races and other activities.

 Don Weise



New Pochuck Boardwalk Kiosks Celebrate Volunteerism

In partnership with New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) and Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC), the Trail Conference spearheaded the revitalization of kiosk signage along the Appalachian Trail at the popular Pochuck Boardwalk in New Jersey. The new signs were installed this spring.

The kiosks installed near Pochuck in 2018 were always intended to become "mini exhibits" about the Appalachian Trail and boardwalk project, with an emphasis on volunteerism (given the perpetual need for volunteer work to keep the boardwalk clear and in good repair) by the likes of our West Jersey Trail Crew and many others. Many

casual hikers also never understood that the "local boardwalk" was part of a much larger, interstate trail. The signs were created to share general hiker information, a local map, how the boardwalk and bridge were built, and the role of ATC and the Trail Conference in stewarding the Appalachian Trail.

"The new material seems to be a huge hit, with a steady stream of visitors pointing at the maps and reading the 'making of the boardwalk' section," reports Trail Program Manager Peter Dolan. "In fact, in all my time at trailheads, I genuinely don't ever recall seeing so many people stopping to really read content—usually people glance over the



panels or take a minute to review or photograph the map, but people seem genuinely interested in all the Appalachian Trail material. Two separate groups of peo-

ple actually turned to me during installation and said, 'This is the Appalachian Trail? The boardwalk?' So it seems like the new content is working as intended!"

Harriman Big Bear SquaTCh Supports Ramapo-Dunderberg Restoration

The Trail Conference and Sassquad Trail Running are proud to present a new event, the Harriman Big Bear SquaTCh, at Harriman State Park in Tuxedo, N.Y., on July 31. Both the 7-mile and 13.1-mile routes highlight the technical trails, beautiful views, and steep climbs of Harriman. Runners and hikers alike are welcome to experience the nonstop trail beauty on this single-loop course. Race registration is directly helping the Trail Conference restore the 100-year-old Ramapo-Dunderberg Trail. (The capitalized "TC" in SquaTCh stands for "Trail Conference"! Learn more at sassquadtrailrunning.com.)



NJ Crew Tackles Invasives

"Our fearless Clipping Brigade tackled several trail sections in Morristown National Historical Park to clip back invasive barberry and multiflora rose (all with many stickers) to wid-

en the trail," reports Trail Chair/Crew Leader Estelle Anderson. "Their efforts were rewarded with many brownies!" The volunteers, still smiling after all that work, from left: Trail Chair/Crew Leader Bob Jonas, Gary Lindemann, Bob McQueen, Skip Wilson, John Rushman, Maryann and Brian Nunes-Vais. Not shown: Bruce Duty.

Volunteer Trail Stewards Needed in NY

Do you love talking trails with fellow hikers? We're recruiting new volunteer Trail Stewards for Hudson Highlands and Fahnestock state parks in New York. Trail Stewards educate and assist the public in

the safe, responsible, and enjoyable use of trails and parks. Training will be held in two parts: The first component can be done online any time before the in-person training, which will be held on Saturday, July 10, at Pelton Pond in Fahnestock from 9 a.m. to noon. Find more information at bit.ly/tc-tst21.



LISSA WESTBROOK

The Long Distance Trails Crew has been working hard to complete the highly technical Upper Nyack Trail relocation at Hook Mountain. This project provides a durable and scenic new route for this side trail from the Long Path. Learn more about the trail's opening at nynjtc.org.

Board Member Aims to Raise Awareness While Hiking Long Path

Meet Charlie Gadol: Trail Conference volunteer, Board member, and race organizer. He's hiking the Long Path this summer in support of our work.

As an active participant in advancing the Trail Conference's mission, Charlie has decided to put his feet to the test—hiking 375 miles of the Long Path—to benefit the organization. This summer, he will set out to section-hike the Long Path, walking the length of the trail from New York City to John Boyd Thacher State Park near Albany.

"The mission of the Trail Conference is to maintain and develop the network of trails that blankets New York and northern New Jersey, and my goal is to promote this mission," Charlie says. "Running the length of most of this territory, the Long Path has always



Charlie Gadol

fascinated me because it unites such varied terrain—from the Palisades, with its Hudson River views, to the popular parks like Harriman, to lesser known stretches like Schunemunk and Gobbler's Knob. It threads its way close to my home in the 'Gunks and continues over the rocky scrambles in the Catskills that I love so much, and on up to the Helderbergs and areas that will be entirely new to me.

"Years ago, I thought about

running the whole way, but now that I am older, I will be happy just to hike it and savor all of its hidden treasures," Charlie says. "This will not be a thru-hike or run in the traditional sense. My plan is to hike some sections on a daily basis and go home at night, but occasionally enjoy camping along the way, taking advantage of everything that our new Long Path Trail Magic group has to offer!"

Interested in exploring the Long Path? Connect with Charlie to join him on one of his day trips: willow333@earthlink.net.

You can help cheer Charlie on his journey and support him in meeting his goal of raising \$1,500 for the Trail Conference mission! Consider making a gift in honor of Charlie today at bit.ly/tc-charlie21.



Our new High Point supervisors noted a bridge that was becoming a hazard on the Iris Trail and made repairs using materials at hand. The volunteers who worked on this project are: Ed Duvinski, Robert Remillard, Kevin Mitchell, and Don Kenny.

Conservation Corps Season Preview

The Trail Conference Conservation Corps (TCCC) creates leaders in environmental conservation while empowering people to play a deeper role in the care of their local parks and trails. Our 2021 Corps features 47 members, including 12 returning members. They have come from all over the country, from Ohio to Maine to Florida. One member even hails from Nigeria! Serving alongside the amazing volunteer base of the Trail Conference, the Corps will work throughout our region to help preserve and protect our lands. Our crews will be working on trail construction, outreach and education, terrestrial invasive species management, and aquatic invasive species management.

Most members will serve from May through October. We also have a group of eight Corps leaders who have been serving since early April and will be on board with us until November. Our leaders have proven to be essential to the planning and training process for our Corps members.

Reflecting on their first week of training, Trail Steward Noelle says: "The last week was challenging (as I expected it would be initially), but even as I was dripping with sweat, slowly pulling myself over rocks at Breakneck, all I could think about was how cool this opportunity is and how incredibly grateful I am to be a team member this season. I'm sure it will be another challenging week ahead starting trail work with the weather in the upper 80s, but I can't wait to get back out there and learn all I can."

Check out the Corps' 2021 projects here and follow their progress throughout the sea-



son on Instagram ([instagram.com/tcconservationcorps](https://www.instagram.com/tcconservationcorps)) and their monthly blog posts (bit.ly/tc-tccc21).



Trail Crews

The Conservation Corps will run five trail crews performing new trail construction and major renovations in northern New Jersey and the Lower Hudson Valley of New York. We have 14 trail crew members, including returning member, Kayla Lynch, and four returning trail crew leaders: Kevin Murphy, Snowden Jones, Ed Zubrowski, and Robert Delap. This year, our crews will be working on trails in Hudson Highlands State Park, Harriman State Park, Sterling Forest State Park, and locations throughout Morris County, N.J., via our new partnership with Morris County Parks. Notable projects include continued improvements of the 100-year-old Ramapo-Dunderberg Trail

and the completion of a new connection of the Undercliff Trail to Breakneck Ridge. Volunteer opportunities with these crews will be available throughout the season!

Invasives Strike Force

The Corps' Invasives Strike Force (ISF) consists of four crew members led by crew leader Kassidy Robinson. They will primarily be managing emerging invasive species—ones that are new to the area with limited populations—with the goal of completely eradicating them from the region. Other projects include managing invasives that impact rare, threatened, and endangered species or habitats to help the native plants thrive. The ISF will be hosting many volunteer work days to teach the public about invasives ecology and management. They would love to see you out there!

Aquatic Invasives Strike Force

The Conservation Corps' Aquatic Invasives Strike Force (AISF) is dedicated to protecting New York's water-



ways through invasive species monitoring, management, education, and outreach. This season, the crew is monitoring invasive and native plants, macroinvertebrates, and water quality in 37 lakes, ponds, and rivers, as well as managing water chestnut at 14 sites throughout the Hudson Valley. They'll also teach boaters and anglers about AIS spread prevention and inspect boats at three Hudson River launches as a part of the Lower Hudson PRISM Watercraft Inspection Steward Program. The crew will be led by Maya Thompson, joined by returning Corps members Claire McMahon and Sudha Petluri.

The AISF crew is managed in part by the LHPRISM Aquatic Invasive Species Program, hosted by Teatown Lake Reservation.

Trail Stewards

The Conservation Corps' Outreach and Education Trail Steward Program consists of two crews: the Hudson Valley Trail Stewards and the Catskill/Minnewaska Trail Stewards. The Hudson Valley Trail Steward Crew is led by returning member Rosa Bledsoe and consists of 11 Trail Stewards, including returning members Melanie Schuck, Conor Dobson, Jennifer Meikle, and Rose Eid. They will be educating the public every weekend and holiday at Breakneck Ridge, Bear Mountain, and Croton Gorge Unique Area. The Stewards this year will also be conducting maintenance along the Long Path, as well as other locations throughout the Hudson Valley.

The Catskill/Minnewaska Trail Steward Crew is led by returning member Myra Romano and consists of seven Trail Stewards who will be stationed at several key locations in the Catskills (Burroughs Range Loop, Blackhead Range, North Point, Giant Ledge) and two locations in Minnewaska State Park Preserve (Gertrude's Nose, Verkeerderkill Falls). The Stewards will be conducting maintenance along the Long Path, as well as other locations throughout Minnewaska. This year, both crews will be tasked with the creation of a video series aiming to educate the public about these hiking destinations, as well as the Leave No Trace principles.



When Camping, Know Where Your Firewood Comes From



BRENT BOSCARINO
INVASIVE SPECIES CITIZEN
SCIENCE PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Every summer, my family delights in spending long weekends in the Adirondacks, where we can kick back and swap stories around a campfire. Who doesn't enjoy a gooey smores, laughter, and the sense of comfort that these types of settings can provide? Whether outdoors or indoors or for ambiance or heat, these fires require wood to serve their purpose. But where is that wood coming from?

Unfortunately, many invasive species that have devastated our region's forests are introduced through moving firewood from an area of infestation to a previously uninvaded area. Eggs, adults, seeds, and diseases caused by invasive threats can be moved in this manner. In fact, the movement of firewood and subsequent introduction of forest pests and diseases into new habitats are believed to be responsible for between \$4.2-\$4.4 billion per year in damages, management costs, and lost revenue in the United States.

Look no further than the destruction caused to our be-



loved ash trees by the invasive emerald ash borer (EAB) to understand the dire consequences that accidental introductions through movement of firewood can have on our forest ecosystems. All species of ash trees are susceptible to EAB and the pest kills nearly every untreated ash tree it inhabits. Once trees are infested, they become extremely hazardous, losing 80% of their

structural integrity within 3-5 years, making it not only an ecological issue but a safety threat as well.

And it's not just EAB that has been introduced and continues to spread through firewood introductions. Asian long-horned beetles and gypsy moths are two more of over 140 forest pests and diseases known to be moved through firewood. With the imminent

threats posed by spotted lanternfly and leaf diseases such as oak wilt and beech leaf disease, there's even more reason to be mindful of what and how we are transporting goods, including firewood, across borders and ecosystems.

Fortunately, the Trail Conference is leading the charge to combat these forest pests before they can take hold. Our Conservation Dogs duo of Fagen and Dia are trained to sniff out both oak wilt (a fungus that causes rapid mortality of oak trees, especially red oak) and spotted lanternfly, helping to detect and prevent further spread of these species in our region. Through the Lower Hudson Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM), we are helping to promote and encourage participation in the citizen science-powered Monitoring and Managing Ash (MaMA) program to search for lingering ash trees, or those trees that stay healthy in the midst of an emerald ash borer infestation. We do this in the hopes of restoring ash through grafting and selective breeding of these robust trees. We are also leading efforts to map the distribution of beech leaf disease

(BLD) in our region through our Invasives Strike Force Eco-Quest Challenge program, in hopes of better understanding the primary means of spread of BLD so we can prevent future introductions.

With the 2021 camping season underway, the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation recently released new guidelines and regulation reminders regarding firewood transportation to promote healthy ecosystems. The current regulations include prohibiting movement of untreated firewood from outside of the state and prohibiting untreated firewood grown in the state from being transported more than 50 miles from its source.

If we can all band together to use only locally sourced or properly treated firewood and commit to not transporting wood long distances, we can continue to enjoy the warmth of a good campfire without fear of accidental introductions of invasive species. For more information on firewood as a method of spread of forest pests or to learn how you can help in the efforts to prevent unintentional introductions, visit dontmovefirewood.org

Federal Aid Proposed in Fight Against Lyme Disease

On June 10, New Jersey Congressman Josh Gottheimer held a press conference on the trails at the West Milford Environmental Center to strongly encourage families to take the threat of tick-borne illnesses and prevention seriously. He and Congressman Chris Smith have introduced legislation to secure federal resources to help families facing Lyme crises.

Trail Conference Director of Donor Advising Don Weise opened the conference, sharing that the legislation has the potential to help deter fears that may prevent many from experiencing the benefits of the outdoors.

"The pandemic has proven

that people need access to the outdoors to be mentally and physically healthy," Weise said. "We must be vigilant and check for ticks, but we can't let Lyme disease keep us locked indoors. [See sidebar for tips on tick-bite prevention.] This legislation gives me hope that we'll find a cure."

The event also featured a group of mothers who shared their stories of prolonged battles against Lyme disease in their families.

"It's my goal that families will come enjoy the outdoors here in the Garden State this summer," Gottheimer said. "I want families to protect themselves from ticks and from the Lyme disease they may carry,

all while enjoying the natural beauty we have to offer. And I want our residents and families who've been affected by Lyme disease to know I stand with them—to push federal bipartisan action forward to boost investment in finding new treatments, and to make sure any child with any impairment or disability from this disease can get the educational services and care they need."

New Jersey has one of the highest rates of Lyme disease in the country. The bills mean more money, more attention and better treatment options and research for tick-borne illnesses. Gottheimer hopes to have them passed by the fall.

Proposed Bills

► **The Children Inflicted by Lyme Disabilities Act:** A bipartisan bill to help ensure children who suffer from Lyme disease get the care and attention they need. The bill (H.R. 3636) will amend the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act so that the phrase "child with a disability" includes a child

who needs special education and related services due to a Lyme disease health impairment.

► **Bipartisan legislation for competitions to find Lyme disease treatments:** This bipartisan bill (H.R. 3637) will authorize the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to launch prize competitions to drive innovation and accelerate

the discovery of new methods to counter and treat Lyme disease.

► **The Stamp Out Lyme Disease Act:** A bipartisan bill (H.R. 3491) to create a brand new postage stamp to supplement congressionally appropriated research funding for Lyme and tick-borne disease treatments at the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

Tips to Help Prevent Tick Bites

- Stay in the center of the trail. Avoid bushwacking (going off trail).
- Avoid trails with high grass or encroaching brush.
- Avoid leaf piles, leaf mulch, and sitting on ground with a heavy leaf cover.
- Wear light-colored clothing to better spot ticks.
- Tuck pants legs into your socks to prevent ticks from attaching to your body.
- Spray insect repellent with 25-35% DEET on exposed skin and clothing. Insect repellents containing Picaridin (20%) or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus (30%) are acceptable alternatives.
- Spray Permethrin on clothing. Do not spray on exposed skin.
 - Permethrin is a highly effective repellent and insecticide. Pay particular attention to treating hiking boots, socks, and pants. Clothing treated with Permethrin may be machine washed, but should not be machine dried. Respray clothing every 6 weeks.



- Use a small plastic salon sprayer with an adjustable nozzle (fine spray) for more even coverage.
- Pick off all ticks when returning from the woods.
- Shower immediately upon returning home. Check your entire body including armpits, groin, and scalp for attached ticks.
- Wash all clothing in hot water. Machine dry on high heat (unless treated with Permethrin) to kill all remaining ticks.
 - Note: While machine drying at high heat will kill ticks, the heat and friction can reduce the effectiveness of Permethrin on treated clothes. Permethrin has a 5-year shelf life.

Compiled by **Howie Liebmann**,
Northwest New Jersey
Trail Chair

Club Spotlight: Hunterdon Hiking Club

Hunterdon County in New Jersey is the home of the Hunterdon Hiking Club. Hunterdon features state, county, and municipal parks, plus protected preserves. Centrally located, Hunterdon is a short drive from the trails of northern and southern New Jersey and parks in nearby New York and Pennsylvania. The abundance of outdoor areas has attracted residents who celebrate being outdoors and have an interest in preserving the land and maintaining its rural nature.

The Hunterdon Hiking Club recently celebrated their 40th anniversary of enjoying the outdoors together. The club started in 1980 as an affiliate of the Hunterdon County Park System and began with one hike a month. Today, they sponsor an outdoor activity almost every day of the week. The activities are categorized to meet differing skill levels; some days are short bike rides or hikes on relatively flat surfaces, others are longer hikes of 4-5 miles over paths in the woods, and others are more challenging hikes of up to 10 miles with steep climbs and rocky trails. In some cases, the



The Hunterdon Hiking Club of New Jersey recently celebrated its 40th year. A Trail Conference member club, the group hosts outings and maintains trails.

hike is a tour of New York City or Philadelphia, with a visit to a museum or other attraction, or a weeklong trip to Shenandoah, the Catskills, or the Adirondacks.

The Hunterdon Hiking Club's outdoor culture is wide-ranging. HHC has continued its relationship with the park system by participating in the parks department's events on Earth Day and National Trails Day. It maintains trails in the Wallpack



Valley and the Musconetcong Gorge, including a section of the Highlands Trail, and every July it sets up a table on the Appalachian Trail and offers fresh food to the thru-hikers—the HHC members get to meet thru-hikers and hear their adventures in exchange for a cold soda and a comfortable chair.

In addition to the outdoor focus, there is a social aspect to the club. Many of the members participate almost weekly in one of the events and have become good friends. After the shorter hikes or rides, members may stop at a little roadside restaurant for lunch and a chat.

The Hunterdon Hiking Club welcomes new members who enjoy the outdoors. HHC is always looking for that new leader who can introduce a new hike, or that person willing to give back through trail maintenance, or just a new member who wants to meet others who share a love of outdoor activity and a love of nature. More information on the club is available at HunterdonHikingClub.org.

Charles Behnken

Hikers' Directory

Can't find your club? This list includes 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.

We welcome new member clubs **Warren County Parks Foundation** (warrenparksfoundation.com), **Hiking Mamas_ Wood2Woods** ([facebook.com/groups/120488335292058](https://www.facebook.com/groups/120488335292058)), and **Maloufs Mountain Sunset Campgrounds** (maloufsmountain.com)!

ADK Long Island
www.adkli.org

ADK Mid-Hudson Chapter
www.midhudsonadk.org

ADK Mohican Chapter
www.adkmohican.org

ADK North Jersey Ramapo Chapter
www.hudsonhikers.org

Adventures for Women
www.adventuresforwomen.org

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter
www.amcdv.org

AMC New York North Jersey Chapter
www.amc-ny.org

Black Rock Forest Inc.
www.blackrockforest.org

Boy Scout Troop 8, Brooklyn

Canal Society of New Jersey
www.canalsocietynj.org

Catskill 3500 Club
www.catskill-3500-club.org

Catskill Mountain Club
www.catskillmountainclub.org

Chinese Mountain Club of New York
www.cmcny.org

Closter Nature Center Association
www.closternaturecenter.org

Dyke Hikes
www.meetup.com/Dyke-Hikes/

East Hampton Trails Preservation Society
www.ehtps.org

Finger Lakes Trail Conference
www.fingerlakestrail.org

Friends of Pelham Bay Park
www.pelhambaypark.org

Friends of the Hackensack River Greenway in Teaneck
www.teaneckgreenway.org

Friends of the Old Croton Aqueduct, Inc.
aqueduct.org

Friends of the Shawangunks
shawangunks.org

German American Hiking Club of New York and New Jersey
www.meetup.com/GAHCNYNJ

HikingMamas_wood2woods

Hilltop Conservancy, Inc.
www.hilltopconservancy.org

Hunterdon Hiking Club
www.hunterdonhikingclub.org

Interstate Hiking Club
www.interstatehikingclub.org

Jolly Rovers Trail Crew Inc.
jollyrovers.org

Little Stony Point Citizens Association
www.littlestonypoint.org

Long Path North Hiking Club
www.schoharie-conservation.org

Manitoga / The Russel Wright Design Center
www.visitmanitoga.org

Monmouth County Park System

Morris County Park Commission
www.morrisparks.net

Musconetcong Mountain Conservancy
mmc.nynjtc.org

Nassau Hiking and Outdoor Club
www.nassauhiking.org

The Nature Place Day Camp
thenatureplace.com

Nelsonville Greenway Committee
VillageofNelsonville.org

New Jersey Forty Plus Hiking Club
meetup.com/NJ-Forty-Plus-Hiking-Club

New Jersey Search and Rescue Inc.
www.njsar.org

New York Alpine Club

New York City Audubon Society, Inc.
www.nycaudubon.org

New York Ramblers
www.nyramblers.org

NJBG/Skylands Association Inc

The Outdoors Club, Inc.
outdoorsclubny.org

Proactive - Adventure, Health & Wellness
www.proactiveahw.com

Protect Our Wetlands, Water & Woods
box292.bluehost.com/~powwworg

Rock Lodge Club
www.rocklodge.com

RPH Cabin Volunteers
rphcabin.org

SAJ - Society for the Advancement of Judaism
www.thesaj.org

Sassquad Trail Running
www.sassquadtrailrunning.com

Shorewalkers Inc.
www.shorewalkers.org

Somers Land Trust
somerslandtrust.org

Sundance Outdoor Adventure Society
www.meetup.com/Sundance-Outdoor-Adventure-Society

Teatown Lake Reservation
www.teatown.org

Tenafly Nature Center Association
www.tenaflynaturecenter.org

Thendara Mountain Club
www.thendaramountainclub.org

Town of Lewisboro
www.lewisborogov.com/parksrec

Trail Dames, Inc

TriState Ramblers
www.tristateramblers.org

Valley Stream Hiking Club
www.meetup.com/vshclub

Warren County Board of Recreation Commissioners
www.warrenparks.com

Warren County Parks Foundation

Westchester Mountain Bike Association
www.wmba.org

Westchester Trails Association
www.westhike.org

Women About
www.womenabout.org

WWW
www.weishike.com

Map Updates and More



JEREMY APGAR
CARTOGRAPHER

Our Publications Committee is always busy preparing the next map or book, so even after a busy past year with its fair share of challenges, we are working on several map updates that we hope to make available very soon.

NORTH JERSEY MAP SET

A significant update is currently in progress, as the maps are being rebuilt from the ground up to include many enhancements over the previous edition. A greatly increased scale, expansion from a two-map to four-map set, inclusion of trail mileage numbers, new detailed elevation contour lines, and a new map showing the Appalachian Trail between High Point and Pochuck Boardwalk are just some of the features that will make this the most substantial update since 2007. The image here of our in-progress draft map illustrates several of these improvements in the Terrace Pond area of Wawayanda State Park as compared to the previous edition. Stay tuned



for expected availability of this new map set that will include 40 parks and preserves and more than 360 miles of trail in northern New Jersey!

JERSEY HIGHLANDS MAP SET

A third edition revision is expected to be available this fall or winter, with some significant trail updates for the area centered on northern Morris County. The previous edition has been out of stock, but some delays and other mapping projects have kept us from making these new maps available. Note that there have been major changes in some parks managed by Morris County Park Commission, so you can also check their website (www.morrisparks.net/parks)



for updated maps for parks in this area in the meantime.

HIGHLANDS TRAIL IN NEW JERSEY MAPS

A new map set featuring the entirety of the Highlands Trail through New Jersey is in development. Once completed, the new maps will help bring some attention to this long-distance trail that goes through nearly 30 parks in New Jersey and extends for approximately 130 miles within the state.

In addition, we are continuing to make improvements to our app maps through the **Avenza Maps app**. This past year, as many people sought out nature therapy, trail users discovered our app maps in record numbers, as our sales

more than doubled in 2020 compared to the previous year! So we'll be continuing to add new maps and help people find the maps they need. The app itself will also see several improvements in the near future to bring more functionality to the app and also make it easier to find maps, so be on the lookout for those enhancements.

And lastly, we can always use help spreading the word about our maps and books, so please consider **advocating for our publications** wherever you might see an opportunity to do so! One way you can help is by leaving reviews for our publications, either on our website or even through **Amazon.com**. (Be sure to use **smile.amazon.com** to support the Trail Conference!) Reviews can help other potential users make a more informed choice for their trail information resources, and it can be as easy as just selecting a star rating without a lengthy written review.

If you'd like to learn more about when these titles become available, be sure to sign up for our e-mail newsletter at bit.ly/tc-newsletters if you aren't already a subscriber.

Join the Trail Conference, Get Great Deals

Check out some of the latest Trail Conference Retail Partners and their great members-only discounts. Visit nynjtc.org/retail-partners for full details on all partner discounts.



Hudson North Cider

Hudson North Cider is a mission-driven company that works to protect and preserve the trails in the Hudson Valley and beyond. Ten cents of every gallon sold, in addition to the funds raised at our Taps for Trails pint nights, are donated to the Trail Conference. hudsonnorthcider.com

Stop paying for polluting fossil fuels.

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The Great Out-Doors

Merrell has partnered with artist Jenny Siegfried for an art installation currently on view outside Trail Conference Headquarters in Mahwah, N.J. The installation invites visitors to walk through a doorway entering the beautiful natural surroundings of the great outdoors in two enticing ways. The front of the door depicts a sweeping view of majestic Mt. Tammany, located

in the Delaware Water Gap. A delightful yellow trail winds through the landscape, highlighting native trees and flowers along the way. The reverse of the door engages visitors to start their own outdoor journey with a scavenger hunt of summer blooming native flowers that could all be spotted just around the next switchback or trail turn. How many can you find? Be sure to post and tag us in your finds using #greateroutdoors, @jennysiegfriedillustrations, @merrell, and @nynjtc.

Shop the AmazonSmile App, Support Trails

Did you know that you can support the work of the Trail Conference simply by shopping online? When you shop AmazonSmile at smile.amazon.com, the retailer donates a portion of eligible purchases to the nonprofit of your choice. (We hope you'll choose the Trail Conference!) Thanks to you, we received \$348.19 from the AmazonSmile Foundation for purchases made January 1 through March 31, 2021.

Making it even easier to support great trails and healthy ecosystems,

AmazonSmile customers can now support the Trail Conference in the Amazon shopping app on iOS and Android mobile phones. Simply follow these instructions to turn on AmazonSmile and start generating donations for the natural areas you love.

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If you do not have the latest version of the Amazon Shopping app, update your app. We are grateful for your support!

Stay Connected!

Upcoming Events

Find details at nynjtc.org/events

▶ Trail Conference Trail Runs: Harriman State Park, NY
July 24

▶ Sassquad Benefit Race: Harriman State Park, NY
July 31

▶ Trail Insider Webinar: Managing High-Use Trails: Why Trail Stewards are a Necessity in Creating Safe,

Sustainable Trails Stewardship
August 11

▶ Trail Insider Meet & Greet: Bear Mountain Trail Stewards, Bear Mountain, NY
August 14

▶ Appreciation Hike: Harriman State Park, NY
August 27

▶ Appreciation Hike: Terrace Pond Floating Walkway, Wawayanda State Park, NJ
September 18



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Trail Extension to Help Ease Congestion at Popular Neversink



MELISSA CASCINI
NEW YORK PROGRAM
COORDINATOR

Over recent years, the Neversink River Unique Area in Rock Hill, N.Y. has become increasingly popular as trail users discover the beautiful falls throughout the gorge. As a result, the most frequently used trailhead off Katrina Falls Road is continuously overburdened with close to 100 cars on a busy weekend day. To draw users to other parking, Trail Conference volunteers have been working with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to build a new section of trail connecting the Blue Trail East to the Skinner Road parking area. The goal is to provide a blue-blazed trail that extends the length of the gorge.

Work on the Blue Trail East extension began in December 2020. Volunteer leader Andy Garrison and DEC Forester Evan Masten mapped out and flagged the intended route in accordance with the Unit Management Plan for the area.



SONA MASON

Mullet Falls is one of the beautiful attractions in the Neversink River Unique Area. The creation of a new trail is meant to disperse visitors to other trailheads.

However, the project has several unique circumstances that make this trail extension something of a challenge.

Crews must walk approximately 4 miles into the worksite carrying heavy tools such as chainsaws, rock bars,

and pick mattocks. Additionally, certain aspects of the project can only take place between November and March

to avoid disturbing sensitive habitat.

Despite these limitations, Volunteer Trail Supervisor Lou Baldanza has successfully organized a number of work trips. Crews of volunteers have cleared the trail corridor of vegetation, removed all blowdowns that fell in the intended route of the trail, and determined the scope of the remaining work. Although much of the work is completed, the last phase of the project will prove to be the most challenging due to terrain that will require a great deal of rock work and trail grading.

Work on the Blue Trail East extension is intended to pick up again this November; that said, no completion date has been set at this time. We'll keep you updated on the project in Trail Walker and at nynjtc.org.

Thank you to DEC Forester Evan Masten and Trail Conference volunteers Lou Baldanza, Andy Garrison, Don Cohen, Myra Gatchalian, Craig Jauvitis, Lorraine Geraghty, Nancy Bachana, Sandra Galindo Baldanza, and Tom Devine for all their work on this project!

Unearthing the History of Neversink Gorge

While the Neversink River Unique Area has become a popular hiking destination in recent years, the stone ruins found in the area date back to the 1800s. Trail Conference volunteer, Nancy Bachana, along with Henry and Gordon MacAdam of the One Room School Houses project, have been working to unearth the history behind the ruins, old roads, and mills in the Hackledam area.

Nancy shared with us some of the research they've "dug up" so far:

The shady trails and waterfalls of Neversink Gorge haven't always been a soothing escape for the hiker. In the 1800s, they were a place of noisy industry. Dutch-speaking lumbermen built sawmills along every stream. They cleared wagon roads so oxen could haul pine logs to the mills. They carted finished boards over Wurtsboro Mountain to the Delaware and Hudson Canal or to Port Jervis.

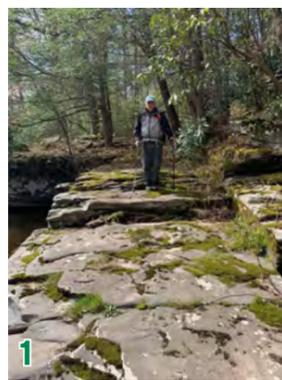
And they dreamed big. Overlooking the rushing Neversink, you can imagine the disappointment felt in 1831 by Otto Van Tuyl of Bridgeville. Looking for a short cut to New York markets, he took \$10,000 from the state to tame the Neversink by blasting the riverbed and diverting the falls. The

Lenape-named "mad river" had other ideas. Perhaps Otto watched from the shore as test rafts careened downriver only to break up on the rocks at Denton Falls. Today, fly fisherman silently cast their lines from a stone apron built as part of the doomed venture.

The hamlet became known as Hackledam. Ruins of a large water-powered sawmill lie on Wolf Brook where it empties into the Neversink. Two more water-powered mills, choked by a century of rhododendron, also stand on Wolf Brook. Curious hikers and historians are now identifying and liberating these and other forgotten ruins that lie just steps from the trail.

Agricultural censuses tell us that lumberman Elijah B. Silvius also ran a large farm where he grazed horses, milk cows, and working oxen. He produced hundreds of pounds of butter for sale each year. His neighbors Griffin, Braisington, Clark, and Millspaugh grazed cows, sheep, and swine. They grew modest crops of rye, Indian corn, potatoes, buckwheat, oats, and hay.

Near the river lies a large foundation that may have been the "very fine home" of Silvius. Local papers report it burned to the ground



1



2



3

1. Volunteer Trail Supervisor Lou Baldanza at stone steps to the river, traveled by oxen hauling logs and cut lumber.

2. Stone foundation to a home, likely that of lumber mill owner Sanford Silvius, which burned in 1897.

3. Volunteer Nancy Bachana inside the remains of a building on the western bank of the Neversink.

in 1897. Perhaps a smaller foundation nearby was his barn, which met the same fate 20 years earlier. By 1918 the settlement was aban-

doned, and its schoolhouse moved nearer to the town of Rock Hill.

A series of wealthy hunters, fishermen, and

conservationists protected the gorge from then until it became a park in 1993.

Ambrose Monell of International Nickel Company was the first. In his zeal to return Hackledam to nature as quickly as possible, he dismantled the buildings down to their stone foundations.

Nancy, the Sullivan County Historical Society, and Volunteer Leader Lou Baldanza aspire to place signage along the trail to mark key historical sites. Although the idea of historical markers is further down the road, historical tours of the area will begin this summer from the Katrina Falls Road trailhead for those who enjoy a bit of history with their hike.

More information on the history of the Neversink can be found on the Rock Hill Business Association website (rockhillny.org/rhhistory), which features a well-done retrospective of the town (from a 1976 printed directory), including Hackledam.

The first Hackledam Tour will be Saturday, July 17, at 9 a.m. from the Katrina Falls trailhead. Others will follow through July and August. Details and future dates will be posted to the Neversink Gorge Unique Area Facebook group page by July 1. RSVPs will limit attendance to a manageable group.