



NATIONAL TRAILS DAY MARKS OPENING OF NEW MOMBASHA CREEK BRIDGE AT INDIAN HILL IN STERLING FOREST

WHAT: Celebration of National Trails Day -- Ribbon Cutting for Mombasha Creek Bridge in Sterling Forest State Park; Tour of Historic Southfields Furnace; Hike at Indian Hill

WHEN: Saturday, June 1, 2002
Remarks 10:00 AM
Tour: 10:30 a.m.
Hike: 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

WHERE: Old Orange Turnpike, Hamlet of Southfields, Town of Tuxedo, Orange County (From Rt. 17 north of Tuxedo, NY and just north of the Red Apple Rest, turn northwest on Old Orange Turnpike, Co. Rt. 19. Proceed 0.7 miles to Hall Drive on the left where there will be parking. The Mombasha Creek Bridge is on the opposite side of Old Orange Turnpike. A map of the area can be found at: <http://www.mapquest.com/maps/map.adp?mapdata=cbPRZS>)

WHO: All are welcome with remarks from officials from the Palisades Interstate Park Commission, New York-New Jersey Trail Conference, and Scenic Hudson, Inc.

The ribbon cutting will celebrate the completion of the Mombasha Creek Bridge, an important means of linking two popular hiking trails in Sterling Forest State Park. Following the ribbon cutting, a tour will be given of the historic Southfields Furnace, used for iron production during the Civil War, with an expert on the furnace's history and architecture. Finally, the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference will lead a hike of the Indian Hill Loop Trail. The trail takes hikers through mature woodlands, along rock outcrops with outstanding views of the Ramapo Valley and Sterling Forest, and past intriguing historic stonewalls.

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Saturday, June 1, 2002, **National Trails Day**, marks the dedication of the new Mombasha Creek Bridge at the Historic Southfields Furnace site located along Old Orange Turnpike, in Sterling Forest. The construction of this prefabricated 35' by 4' fiberglass and wood pedestrian bridge was a collaborative effort by the Indian Hill land owner, The Scenic Hudson Land Trust, Inc., and the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference who provided all the installation costs and overall coordination.

The dedication will mark National Trails Day by linking two popular hiking trails in Sterling Forest State Park with the Mombasha Creek Bridge. Following the ribbon cutting, a tour will be given of the historic Southfields Furnace, used for iron production during the Civil War, by an expert on the furnace's history and architecture. Finally, the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference will lead a hike of the Indian Hill Loop Trail. The trail takes hikers through mature woodlands, along rock outcrops with outstanding views of the Ramapo Valley and Sterling Forest, and past intriguing historic stonewalls.

The Indian Hill property was acquired by The Scenic Hudson Land Trust, Inc. in 1997, during the period when Sterling Forest was being acquired by the State of New York. The Land Trust is currently in the process of transferring this property, including the land on which the new bridge sits, to the State to become part of Sterling Forest State Park.

The bridge offers a safe and scenic passage to and from the new Wildcat Mountain, Furnace, and Indian Hill Loop Trails and a linkage to the 80-year old Appalachian Trail. These new trails, completed in the past four years, have proved to be popular hiking destinations for visitors to Sterling Forest State Park. Prior to the completion of the bridge, a nearly half-mile road walk detour on the busy Old Orange Turnpike was required to find a safe place to cross the creek that separates the trails.

With the Mombasha Creek Bridge in place, access to a regional network of trails is greatly enhanced. It is now possible for a weekend hiker to complete either a one-day or two-day circle hike from New York City using public transportation.

Scenic Hudson, Inc. is a 38-year-old nonprofit environmental organization, which together with the separately incorporated Scenic Hudson Land Trust is dedicated to protecting and enhancing the scenic, natural, historic, agricultural and recreational treasures of the Hudson River and its valley. To date it has protected 17,700 acres of land in 10 counties and created or enhanced 28 parks and preserves for public enjoyment.

The New York-New Jersey Trail Conference is a non-profit federation of 85 hiking and conservation minded organizations and over 10,000 individual members working together to build and maintain trails and land stewardship. Formed in 1920, the founders built the first section of the Appalachian Trail in 1923. Today, the Conference's trail system covers more than 1,500 miles. Membership dues, publication sales, donations and more than thirty-five thousand of hours of volunteer work annually, support the Conference.