



Connecting People with Nature since 1920

156 Ramapo Valley Road • Mahwah, NJ 07430 • T 201.512.9348 • F 201.512.9012 • www.nynjtc.org

For Immediate Release (6/5/2015)

Contact: Jeff Senterman
Senior Program Coordinator
518-628-4343 | jsenterman@nynjtc.org

Seasonal Summit Steward Pilot Launching in June at Slide Mountain in the Catskills

The New York-New Jersey Trail Conference (Trail Conference) and the Catskill 3500 Club, in collaboration with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), announce the establishment of a seasonal Summit Steward Program in the Catskill Park. The 2015 pilot program will focus on Slide Mountain, the Catskills highest summit and one of its most popular destinations.

The seasonal Summit Stewards, hired and managed by the Trail Conference and supported by a generous gift from the Catskill 3500 Club, will spend summer weekends on the summit of Slide Mountain through Columbus Day Weekend. The Stewards will be trained in leave no trace backcountry ethics, the fragile summit elevation environment, and the history and importance of the Catskill Park and forest preserve. They will greet, educate and assist the public and will also help the NYSDEC Forest Rangers respond to emergencies in the area.

In addition to the paid seasonal stewards, the Trail Conference will be offering interested individuals the opportunity to become a volunteer summit steward who will support the seasonal staff. Those who are interested in volunteering should visit the Catskill Conservation Corps at www.catskillconservationcorps.org/volunteer.

The Trail Conference and the Catskill 3500 Club are committed to building on this seasonal pilot program to expand to other Catskills summits in the future. To that end, the organizations are looking for support from donors, organizations and foundations to continue and grow the pilot program in 2016 to include additional summits.

Jeff Senterman, the Trail Conference's Senior Program Coordinator and Catskills staff representative said "This new partnership between the Trail Conference, the Catskill 3500 Club and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation illustrates the collaborative nature of efforts to improve the Catskill Park. Our Summit Stewards will help interpret and introduce the Catskill Park while educating the public on the importance of the Catskill Forest Preserve and its open spaces."

Jim Bouton, the Chair of the Catskill 3500 Club's Summit Stewardship Committee said "The Catskill 3500 Club is excited to be funding this first Catskill Summit Stewardship Program, which will be implemented in partnership with the Trail Conference and the DEC. We feel that the Summit of the Catskills highest peak, Slide Mountain, is in need of protection and preservation due to overuse and frequent misuse, and having a steward's presence there will help to accomplish those goals in many ways, not least of which is through educating the visiting hikers about taking proper care of the fragile environment. We take our role as a hiking group devoted not only to visiting, but also protecting the Catskills summits very seriously, and hope that this program not only succeeds but is replicated at other Catskills peaks in the future."

Follow the Trail Conference on Twitter twitter.com/NYNJTCCatskills to keep up with weekend news from Slide Mountain, see photos and hear the Steward's stories from the summit. To learn more about hiking, trail conditions, trail maps and Trail Conference programs in the Catskills, visit www.nynjtc.org/catskills.

###