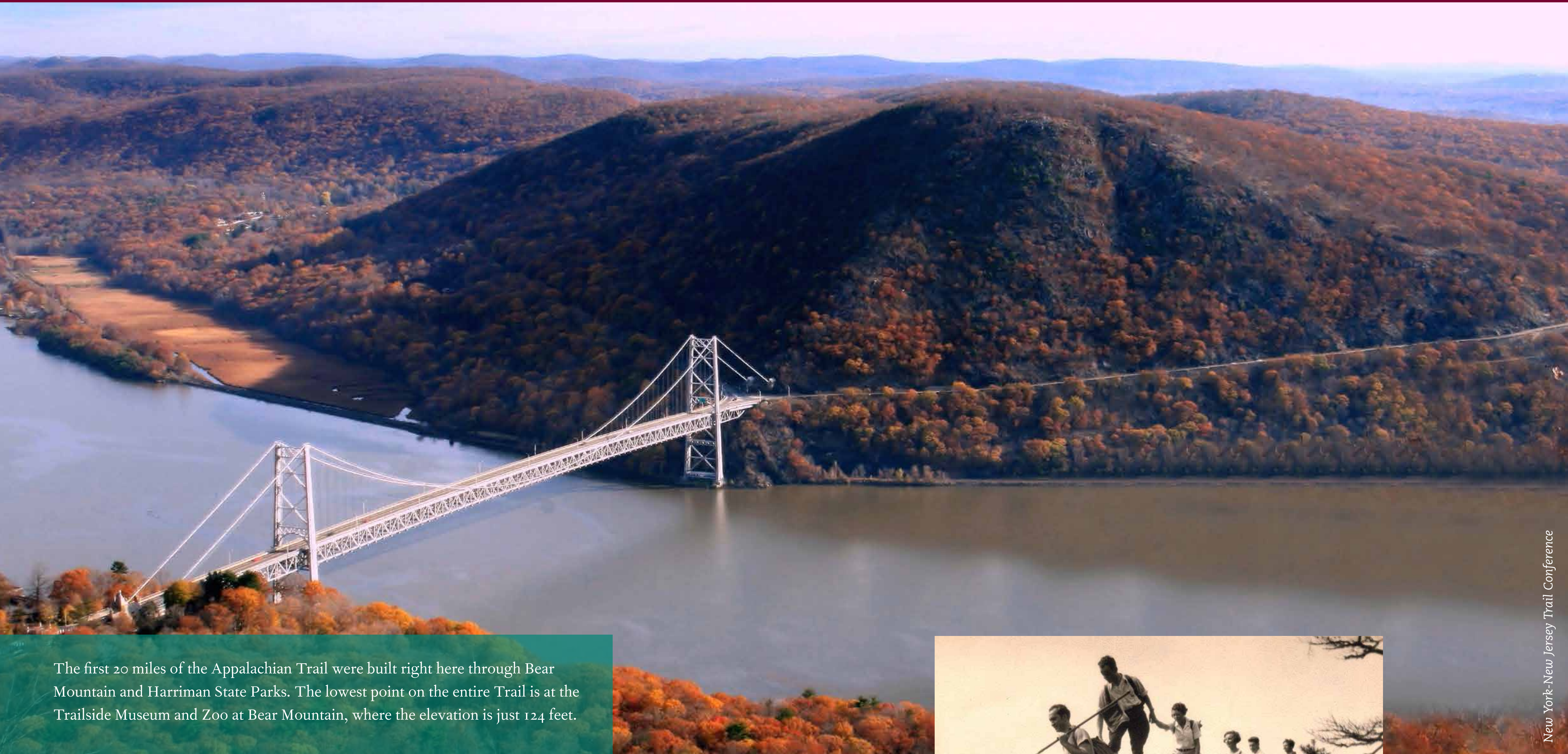


Preserving a National Landmark



The first 20 miles of the Appalachian Trail were built right here through Bear Mountain and Harriman State Parks. The lowest point on the entire Trail is at the Trailside Museum and Zoo at Bear Mountain, where the elevation is just 124 feet.

CARING FOR A 2,200-MILE FOOTPATH

Managing a hiking trail that passes through 14 states and an even greater number of communities and parks along its 2,200-mile length is a complex responsibility shared by numerous national, regional, and local agencies, as well as volunteer-based non-profit organizations. At the national level, the Appalachian Trail (A.T.) is the responsibility of the National Park Service, which oversees and safeguards more than 400 natural and historic places for the public, in partnership with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, a private, not-for-profit organization dedicated exclusively to the preservation and management of the A.T.



New York-New Jersey Trail Conference



Jerrica Lauvooy

ABOVE In the early 1900s, walking clubs like the Wanderbirds, seen here, became popular with New York City residents seeking fresh air and outdoor recreation. It was these clubs that built the first hiking trails in this region.

LEFT A lot has changed since the 1920s, when the Appalachian Trail was first built. But one thing has remained the same: Trails still allow us to step away from our hectic lives and reconnect with nature.



Georgette Weir

ABOVE Members of the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference and its maintaining clubs volunteer their time to help keep trails open and safe.

TOP RIGHT Under the authority of maintaining clubs, volunteer maintainers “adopt” sections of trail, which they regularly inspect to ensure the path is accessible, easy to follow, and free of hazards.

RIGHT Sometimes, the best way to keep a trail open is to build a new section of hiking path around dangerous or eroded areas. The exact mileage of the Appalachian Trail changes slightly from year to year due to such relocations. This A.T. reroute in 1986 was celebrated with a ribbon-cutting.



New York-New Jersey Trail Conference



New York-New Jersey Trail Conference

APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) strives to ensure that the Appalachian Trail’s “vast natural beauty and priceless cultural heritage can be shared and enjoyed today, tomorrow, and for centuries to come.” ATC, founded in 1925, works with federal, state, and local agencies and 31 “maintaining clubs,” such as the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference, to cooperatively manage the Appalachian Trail. ATC provides education, resources, and inspiration for hikers and trail volunteers from around the world.

BUILDING SUSTAINABLE TRAILS

In 2006, the Bear Mountain Trails Project was established to make Bear Mountain State Park’s trails more sustainable for the high level of use they receive. This initiative has been made possible through a cooperative agreement between the National Park Service, Appalachian Trail Conservancy, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Palisades Interstate Park Commission, and New York-New Jersey Trail Conference.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Parks, Recreation
and Historic
Preservation