

# Rock Splitting

Stone splitting is the ancient art and science of cutting boulders – because rocks don’t always naturally come in the exact size or shape trail builders need! First, the rock is examined to determine how it will split best. Next, holes are drilled every few inches along the desired split line. Tapered tools known as feathers are then paired with narrow steel wedges and inserted into the holes. The wedges are hammered one at a time, ensuring each one remains at the same resistance against the feathers and rock. As the split nears, the noise produced by the struck wedges increases in pitch, like a xylophone. Finally, with a “snap, crackle, pop,” one rock becomes two.



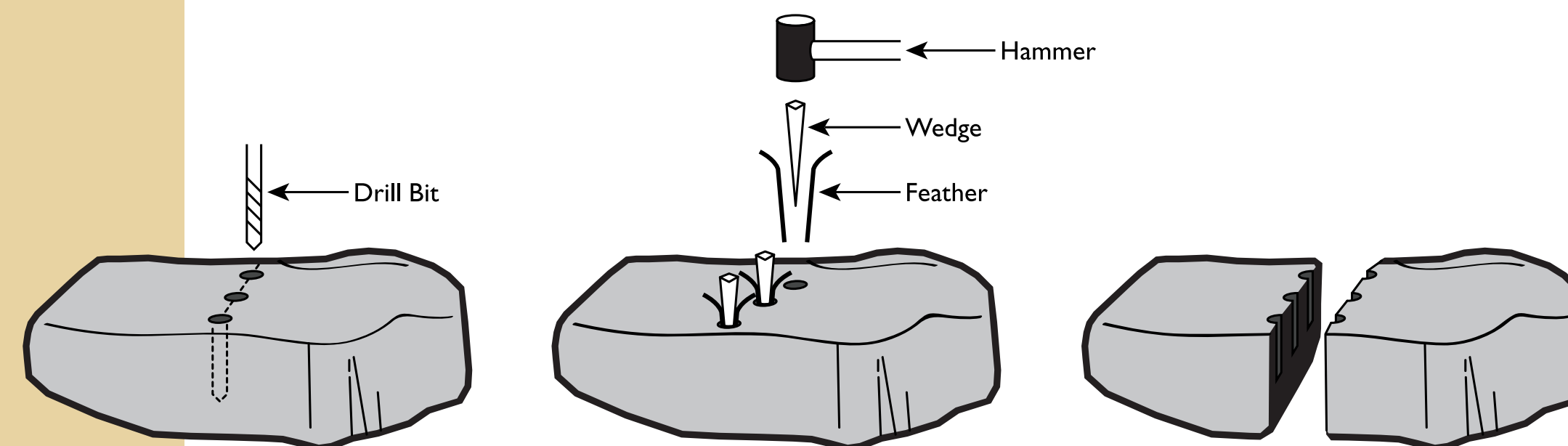
New York-New Jersey Trail Conference



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**BELOW** Holes are drilled in a line by rotary hammer drills.

**ABOVE** Each set of feathers and wedges is hammered into the stone to split the rock.

**LEFT** Rock splits best when it is cut in half, with an equal mass on each side of the divide.