How do you like your Breakneck?

By Kali Bird

“You know this is a scramble, right?”

One person in the group of eight pokes his head up and asks, “What’s a scramble?”

“It’s climbing, but you don’t need fancy gear. You’ll want to have both of your hands free.” Each stares down at the coffee cup, water bottle, or cell phone in their hand and then sheepishly at the two people in the group who brought backpacks.

“Do you have a map?” I ask.

Some head-shaking. After I explain that they are about to scramble up three-quar ters of a mile to an elevation over 1,200 feet to enter more than 7,000 acres of hilly terrain, they agree that a map would indeed be helpful, and we begin to plot a course for their hike.

This is a typical encounter that I have had with first-time visitors to the Breakneck Ridge trailhead. Breakneck Ridge is easily the most strenuous ascent in the Hudson Highlands, and yet many unknowing visitors arrive in flip-flops and without water on even the hottest of days. It is no wonder that the Hudson Highlands State Park office and local emergency responders regularly receive calls from lost and injured hikers. For these reasons, the park managers turned to the Trail Conference and asked for help.

And so, in August, the Trail Conference hired Brett Schollman to assist the hordes of hikers that arrive each weekend, many not knowing what they’re about to get themselves into.

Through Labor Day, Brett and I staffed a table along busy Route 9D at the foot of the most popular trail in North America (according to Trails.com) or hiked along the trail, sharing info about how to hike safely and injured hikers. For these reasons, the Trail Conference hopes to resume the Breakneck Ridge Trail Stewards program next year, starting on Memorial Day weekend. To support this program, go to our website, click on Donate, and type “Breakneck Stewards” in the instructions box.

Join Us at the Sterling Forest Trails Project

The Trail Conference has entered into an agreement with New York State Parks to develop a volunteer-based back-country trails restoration program at Sterling Forest State Park, and we welcome your participation.

The program will train volunteers to inventory and assess trails, repair existing trails, and build new ones. If you are an able-bodied person with an enthusiasm for outdoor service, consider coming out with us.

By this definition, the scenic Breakneck Ridge Trail is one of the most historically significant and inspirational regions in our country. I love to share with hikers the story of Storm King’s survival; it is known across America as the birthplace of environmental protection, thanks to a landmark judicial decision that gave conservationists legal standing to protect the environment in the public interest.

flora, fauna, and history; steered dozens of visitors back onto trails they missed, and assisted multiple injured hikers. [See a letter from one assisted hiker on page 2.] Neither New York State nor local emergency responders received a single call while we were on the ridge during that time.

And thanks to the vision and generosity of those who live along its banks, hard-working nonprofit organizations, and the New York State government, we have the ability to freely recreate in and be inspired by this defining, majestic landscape. It is my hope that everyone takes the opportu-
Feedback

An International Thank-you
On August 24, 2013 Loneranger wrote on our website:
I am visiting from The Netherlands and found myself at a loose end this weekend so I thought I would try to see if I would be able to do some hiking. It was very pleasantly surprised.

The directions on the website are excellent and I got round the route [at Norvin Green State Forest] with no problems at all. The views were outstanding and the trails are really well managed.

I hope that you people realise that your work is appreciated and that it allows all kinds of people to experience the pleasures of this spectacular part of the world.

All the best from the low countries.

Trail Walker

First Hike Was Great
On August 6th, 2013 Thaeghst1 wrote:
Thank you very much for the excellent detailed hike. This was my first hike ever and couldn’t be better. I enjoy the outdoors and am very active; the rocks were awesome! Felt great pacing up the rocks and the heart rate pumping.

Editor’s Note:
An addition to our information on the Darlington Headquarters project in our last issue:
This project was assisted by a grant from the Bergen County Historic Preservation Trust Fund, a part of the Bergen County Open Space, Recreation, Farmland and Historic Preservation Trust Fund.

What’s a Trail Worth?
In the case of the proposed Catskill Mountain Rail Trail (CMRT) we know, thanks to an economic impact study. The study, entitled Catskill Mountain Rail Trail: Economic & Fiscal Impact Analysis, was conducted by Camosun Associates. The report was commissioned by the Trail Conference, with support from Ulster County businesswoman Sean Eldridge and The Dyson Foundation. The proposed 32- to 38-mile rail trail would connect the city of Kingston with Belleayre Ski Resort in Ulster County, with the goal of creating a world class tourist destination that enhances the region’s recreational resources in the Catskill Mountain Region.

Recreational trails like the proposed Catskill Mountain Rail Trail are not only popular, they provide significant economic benefits for the county and state.

“Recreational trails like the proposed Catskill Mountain Rail Trail are not only popular, they provide significant economic benefits for the county and state,” said Edward Goodsell, Executive Director of the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference.

“There is no doubt that this rail trail will be a tourism destination and enhance the current recreational resources in the Catskills while generating sales and jobs for small businesses both right in Ulster County. For the first time, this rigorous study provides the public with hard facts about the economic benefits this trail development will bring.”

The CMRT is currently in the planning stages and there remain outstanding issues to resolve. The Trail Conference is actively working with all parties, including Ulster County and the Friends of the Catskill Mountain Railway, to help make this trail a reality. A link to the complete study can be found on the Trail Conference’s website at: nynjtc.org/files/CatskillMtnRailTrail.EconomicFiscalImpactAnalysis.pdf

In between Trail Walker issues, you can keep up with trail news by subscribing to e-Walker, our twice a month (usually) electronic newsletter.
Go to our website and click the blue “Get Our E-Newsletter” button.

As CAMPMOR celebrates our 35th Anniversary, we’d like to thank the NY-NJ Trail Conference and all its members for your continued support.
Through 12/31/13, bring this ad with you—or mention it—at next time you visit our Retail Store and receive a CAMPMOR 35th Anniversary Iron-on Patch for free plus 35% off a Trail Conference membership or renewal. CAMPMOR’s LOCAL Carrying Gear Outfitter.

Celebrate the Catskills during the 10th Lark in the Park!
The 10th Annual Lark in the Park will offer exciting hiking, paddling, cycling, fishing, nature walks and lectures as well as cultural events throughout the entire Catskill Mountains region. From October 5 through 14, you can enjoy more than 50 outdoor activities during the 10-day “Lark” celebration, sponsored by New York-New Jersey Trail Conference, the Catskill Mountain Club (CMC), and The Catskill Center.

You can help us celebrate creative creation of the Catskill Park by hiking to a Catskill fire tower, paddling the Pepacton Reservoir, cycling on the Catskill Scenic Trail, learning about the region’s ecology, and much more. Lark in the Park group activities are typically free of charge - everyone is welcome!

The schedule of activities is available online at www.catskillpark.org.

Lark in the Park was originally celebrated in 2004 when the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) called on the CMC to help them mark the 100th anniversary of the Catskill Park’s founding. The NYSDEC is again a key supporter of this important anniversary.

For more information on Lark in the Park, call 518-628-4243, e-mail catskill@nynjtc.org, or follow the Lark on Facebook (www.facebook.com/CatskillsLarkinThePark).
From the Executive Director

Trails of the people, by the people, for the people.

That, with a nod of thanks to Abraham Lincoln for the inspiration (his words are in the air during this 150th year since Gettysburg), is the Trail Conference and our mission.

Our trails: ed, by, and for trail-using people.
Our maps and books: ed, by, and for trail-using people.
Our conservation and advocacy work: ed, by, and for trail-using people.
Our staff and operations: ed, by, and for trail-using people.

Over the 93 years of our existence, much has changed, but these essentials have not. 90 years ago, Benton MacKaye’s idea of a linear trail along the Appalachian Mountain range line landed on fertile ground in New York-New Jersey. Our predecessors no sooner absorbed the idea than they hit the ground running, building miles of new trail in Harriman-Bear Mountain State Park, linking these new sections with others already on the ground, and, in a matter of months, declaring the first 24 miles of the Appalachian Trail built. The achievement—of, by, and for the people—was celebrated October 7, 1923. [Join us for a commemorative hike on Sunday, October 6, enjoy the trail and see how we are improving it for hikers now and in years to come in new details, see Hikers Almanac, page 4.]

These trail-blazers and their successors built a lego-never-ending legacy that we inherit, enjoy, and are determined to enhance and pass on to those who follow.

In the 1990s, JoAnn Dolan and Neil Zammuner, both recently emeritus execu- tive director and emeritus chairman, led the Trail Conference’s successful effort to protect 14.50-mile-plus public parkland. That success created the need and opportunity for new and enhanced public trails at the new state park, and our volunteers have maintained trails at Sterling Forest ever since.

This year, New York State Parks asked us to expand our work at the park to include a thorough trail inventory, building the new Dona Duke Trail in a no-hunting-area of the park (giving hikers a lovely new place to go during hunting season), and restoring other trails. Our Sterling Forest Trails Proj- ect (see page 1) is the result, and it builds on the successes of the Trail Conference under JoAnn and Neil’s leadership. In fact, JoAnn’s son, a skilled and knowledgeable outdoor educator (you can read about what he’s been up to on the three intern reports on the project this season.

In 1992, we collaborated with the Appalachian Trail Conference and the N. J. Dept. of Environmental Protection to cosponsor two Appalachian Trail Ridgerunners in the heavily used Kittatin- nny Ridge area. The idea was to educate hikers about safety and trail etiquette and to protect the trail and its resources. It was so successful, we soon added a third Ridgerunner. (See a story from one of this year’s ridgerunners on page 5.)

We looked to this success on the AT for inspiration when staff at Hudson Highlands State Park requested our help in similarly educating hikers on what has been called the “most popular” trail in the coun- try, the Breakneck Ridge Trail. Our Trail Stewards there very quickly were making a huge difference in the quality of hikers’ experience and reducing the number of calls to park staff and emergency services for help or rescue. (See page 1.)

And so it goes.

We are determined to protect and enhance the trail legacy that we inherited and enjoy.

Even our pending office relocation will build on precedent and move us closer to where the trails and trail users are and expand our potential for trails education. This time, and at last, we’ll actually be a trail head location. (For those new to our histo- ry, before moving to Mahwah in 2001, the Trail Conference office was on Madison Avenue in Manhattan.) Like anything we do, this is a trail project of the people, by the people. Don’t miss out on helping to see it happen! Please make a donation by October 31.

—Edward Gould, Executive Director

Edward Gould

With both communities well-served by Metro North rail service, the centers of population will have a green connection between them, and visitors will use it to connect to the communities and to nature. The Hudson Field Trail will accommodate all: hikers, bikers, seniors, families, those with disabilities. The area is already a base- nation for international travelers, and the trail will make their trip easier and safer.

Critical to the success of all these activities is a appropriate space to create a multi-modal train. Whether at its cramped space in Manhattan before 2001, or its current office in Mahwah, the Trail Conference has not had this resource. In one fell swoop, the ren- ovated Darlington Schoolhouse will change the Trail Conference work space from a liability to an asset; the direct and indirect benefits for the Trail Conference’s volunteers and each user of the trail system will extend for years into the future.

This is a great opportunity for the Trail Conference—by analogy to a hike on the Appalachian Trail from Hessian Lake to the summit of Bear Mountain, the Darlington Schoolhouse campaign has crossed the 1000-foot elevation and is nearing the summit. It’s within reach—let’s finish the climb.

Make your gift now at nynyjtc.org/donatedarlington

Update: Support Grows for Multi-use Trail along Hudson Highlands State Park

Local citizen groups and governmental agencies continue to work together to develop the Hudson Fjord/Bike/Trail—a separated, multi-use, 9-mile trail along the Hudson River linking Constitution Island in Cold Spring to the City of Beacon train station. The riverfront towns of Philipstown and Fishkill, the City of Beac- con and the Village of Cold Spring, Duchess and Putnam counties, scenic Hudson, Hudson Highlands Land Trust, the Open Space Institute, the Trail Confer- ence, and elected officials are working collaboratively on the project with the NYS Department of Transportation, NYS Office of Fish, Wildlife and Inland Fisheries, and Metro-North Railroad. The project is featured in both the Mid-Hudson Regional Economic Development Plan and the Mid-Hudson Sustainability Plan.

First reported on in the July 2008 issue of Trail Walker, the goal of the overall proj- ect is to transform a portion of State Route 9D in the heart of the Hudson Highlands from a high-speed thoroughfare into a multi- use, user-friendly recreational, tourism-oriented parkway that provides people with a strong visual and physical connection with the Hudson River.

This section of Route 9D links two of the region’s most significant historic com- munities, the Village of Cold Spring and the City of Beacon, and connects a number of important public resources, including Hudson Highlands State Park, Little Stony Point, and Beacon, all of which offer outstanding trail networks and views of the Hudson River, Storm King Mountain, and Bannerman’s Castle.

The road is heavily used in all seasons by people seeking to access some of the most outstanding outdoor recreational opportu- nities in New York State. In fact, the Breakneck Ridge Trail currently ranks as the number one hike in the country in an online poll conducted by TrailLink.com. Set due to the road’s design, the public—particularly bicyclists and pedestrians—cannot use it, enjoy, and are determ ined to enhance and pass on to those who follow.

And so it goes.

—Edward Gould, Executive Director

Edward Gould

Just how busy—and unsafe—is the Hudson Highlands State Park corridor? Watch these YouTube videos to get a virtual experience of the trailhead experience at “the number one hike in the country”: Breakneck Ridge youtube.com/watch?v= k6q7O6ThW-w. Follow this link about Little Stony Point: youtube.com/watch?v=8ODkcm12C58

Our work space will go from liability to asset in one fell swoop

As a hiker and life member of the Trail Conference, I have loved every minute of my time spent traversing as many miles as possible of the Trail Conference’s ever expanding 2,000+ mile trail network. This unique system—consisting of through trails, connecting trails, out-and-back trails, and circular trails in “island” settings—owes its existence to the Trail Conference and its volunteers who build, improve, and maintain it.

On the trail, hikers merely see the path forward—defined, marked, and maintained. What they don’t see is the organization and coordination required to deploy effectively more than 1500 volunteers. These volunteers may contribute by maintain- ing a three-mile stretch of trail in a municipal park, designing the Trail Conference’s website, creating Trail Conference publications and maps, constructing a water bar or stone steps miles from the near- est access point.

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ANNUAL FALL MEETING SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5 AT CROTON POINT Register now: nynyjtc.org/event/fallmeeting2013 or call 201-512-9348 ext. 26

Mark Your Calendar Now For Our Fall Sale Dates

Monday, November 18 through Wednesday, November 20
Purchase Maps, Books, Combo packages at special pre-holiday rates. Make your holiday gift purchases before Thanksgiving, then kick back and enjoy the pleasures of the season.

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Member Trail Tale

Emental the Bear

By B. Fingerhut/Tree Hugger; August 6, 2013

Years earlier I had chosen a modest cliff in Huntertart Park as the place to ask Flow-erChild/Ronnie to marry me. We had now been hiking for over thirty years and had experienced most of the pleasures of the forest together, but we had never seen a bear.

We were at our engagement spot near The Long Path, and finishing a leisurely picnic lunch of salad and cheese. FlowerChild whispered, "What's that on the cliff?" I looked up, and turned on the rocks overlooking the valley, and up the cliffs, and through the trees to spot a large bear, near the top of a nearby cliff.

It was a large brown bear, and we were able to watch it for several minutes as it climbed the rocks and walked along a large ledge. The bear was calm and uninterested in us, and we were able to watch it for quite some time before it disappeared into the trees.

It was a wonderful experience, and we were both excited to share it with each other. We continued our hike, but it was clear that we had been fortunate to see such a large and beautiful bear.

Find more hikes on our website: nyntjc.org/content/scheduled-hikes

Find many more hikes at www.nyntjc.org. Click on Schedules of Hikes under Go Hiking!
The three hikers were late leaving Sunfish Pond on the Kittatinny Ridge for the hike out, did not see trail markers in the fading light, and lost their way. It got dark. They did not bring flashlights. Stuck in the woods, they thought about their options and had few. Jonathan called 911. It was 10pm.

Dispatch told them to sit tight and be patient; help would be coming soon. Dispatch called the nearest park ranger and then me, a New Jersey Appalachian Trail ridgerunner, at 10:15. This is my second season as a ridgerunner on the Trail, but my first late night emergency.

"We've got three hikers lost in the woods in Worthington State Forest and we need you to go find them," the dispatcher said. "It's a guy, his girlfriend and his mother. They said they were on the Dunnfield Creek Trail and had been hiking for a half hour from Sunfish Pond when they got lost.

I called Jonathan again and tell him they are on the Dunnfield Creek Trail and that the trail will get smoother and flatter as we go. I offer water, but they just want to get moving. I explain that we first have to cross Dunnfield Creek to get back on the trail. I pick my way across the rocks and then light their way as they follow. The trail is sometimes elusive, but we are slow and careful and finally see a pair of lights dancing in the trees ahead. It's Shawn and Alejandro Santiago, who talks to the three hikers to make sure they are fine.

The trail is clear and we hike on, six of us now. It will take about 45 minutes to get back up the hill to the ATV and probably another hour for Shawn and Alex to get Jonathan, his mom, and his girlfriend back to their car. It is Monday morning. Jonathan says it will be 4:30 before he gets home and he had to work that day.

The three smile their thanks as we part company at Backpacker Campsite. Mom gets the passenger seat of the ATV and will have to get up from the seat a couple times to clear it. Shawn says he's bringing a bilin-der".

I am comfortable in the woods, but the lost hikers are probably not, at least not right now. My job is to find them and lead them to safety. I'm going on a rescue! How cool is that! Just don't scrub it up.

I wake a near-camper and tell him I need to borrow his headlamp to help three hikers who are lost without lights. He's not happy, but offers up his lamp. I promise to return it, and then head north.

I carry a daypack and two liters of water, an emergency radio, first aid kit, my phone, the extra headlamp, snacks, and my trusty flashlight. I plod through the dark and worry about how the hikers are doing. They might be close, or might be hours away. It's steep and open and they can see down on their bottoms if need be and dig in their belts. Just go slow and be careful.

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Two More Bridges at Minnewaska Rebuilt

Two More Bridges at Minnewaska Rebuilt in 2011, were rebuilt in July by crews of volunteers working under the supervision of trails professional Eddie Walsh (Tahawus Trails) and our Minnewaska Trails Supervisor Dave Webber. The bridges take hikers over a split in the stream in an area northeast of Route 44/55. Volunteers included: Mike Garrison, Dave Webber, Joan James, Jim Gehlhard, Lucy Walsh, Gene Maloney, the Wednesday Hikers of Mohonk Preserve, about 25 volunteers from I Love My Park Day, and Eddie Walsh, who donated many hours to the project.

Taming the Taurus (EP)

Sometimes, the Mount Taurus is positively surges back and through the courses of several work days. Now, instead of barberry bushes, one sees large swaths of native grasses and wildflowers such as milkweed which are appropriate to the sunny rocky crests at Perkins Tower on top of Bear Mountain.

Our fearless Invasives Strike Force trail crew volunteers have been busy attacking and removing mounds of thorny barberry bushes on Bear Mountain over the course of several work days. Now, instead of barberry bushes, one sees large swaths of native grasses and wildflowers such as milkweed which are appropriate to the sunny rocky crests at Perkins Tower on top of Bear Mountain. In total, more than 100 volunteers removed invasive plants over nine work days during the last two years at Bear Mountain. Our volunteers removed several large patches of the highly invasive vine, black swallowwort, and treated some stands of Japanese angelica tree (see article on page 9) along the Appalachian Trail on the east side of the mountain. All of these species have become serious threats to the native habitats in our region.

In addition to working on Bear Mountain, our volunteers also removed invasive at Storm King State Park, High Tide State Park, Turnlawn Lake Reservation, and Westchester Wilderness Walk in New York, and at Rock Brook Nature Center, Ramapo Valley County Reservation, Norvin Green State Forest, Abram Hewitt State Forest, and Worthington State Forest in New Jersey. Thanks to our volunteers, we are gaining a reputation as good stewards of the environment. We welcome everyone to join us in this highly rewarding work.

To get added to the ISF mailing list, email Linda Rohlleder (seen behind barberry debris above) at lrohleder@nynjtc.org.
A New Trail Takes Shape at Sterling Forest

The first leg of the new Doris Duke Trail at Sterling Forest is complete, thanks to many volunteers who have worked over the last several weeks. When complete, the trail will be a 4-mile loop, beginning at the trailhead on Benjamin Meadow Road in the northwestern section of the preserve and co-aligning with the Allis Trail/Highlands Trail (the trail is shown on the 2013 edition of Sterling Forest Trails map #100). Most of the new 3-mile section will create a roughly 25-mile wilderness route without any road crossings between Peekamoose Road in the south and Lane Street in the north. Along the way, LPH hikers will climb Peekamoose, Table, Slide, Cornell, Wittenberg, Cross, Pleasant, and Romer Mountains.

We hope to complete major construction on the new trail by late this fall, with some mountain rail crews and drainage in several locations for the Long Path in the Catskills. When completed, the new 3.5-mile section will create a roughly 25-mile wilderness route without any road crossings between Peekamoose Road in the south and Lane Street in the north. Along the way, LPH hikers will climb Peekamoose, Table, Slide, Cornell, Wittenberg, Cross, Pleasant, and Romer Mountains.

Moving the Furniture
By John B. Binnenger

Years before I signed on as the trailkeeper of a section of the Northeast Trail in the Mohonk Preserve, a chain-sawyer cut through a squared-off length of a big blowdown to clear the path and cut out a passage for hikers. But this heavy piece of timber let loose and rolled like a log down into the brook of the adjoining ravine.

I never liked that log—impeding the drainage, looking decidedly not natural and offensive to my aesthetic sense. So on April 25, 2013, I decided to wrestle with that long and heavy log and shove it back up to where it belonged—up from the rivulet and over to its final resting place next to its fallen proximal tree.

But that log liked rolling down, put up a stiff fight, and smacked me right in the kisser—severely lacerating my upper lip. I really didn’t like that at all. Undaunted, I struggled up the embankment with this devil, yielding now, and I beat that beast—question, “Is your trail a joy to follow?”

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We thank these retail partners for their extra support in selling Trail Conference memberships at their stores!

CAMP MORP Top Mountains

Brooklyn Outfitters

Hunting Seasons 2013

Hikers need to be aware of the 2013 hunting seasons in NY and NJ. For full contact details, visit http://www.nyntc.org/news/hunting-seasons-2013

Our new building will shout, “We’re more than a 10% discount!”

When I first joined the Board, I was not expecting the scope of the Trail Conference and the exacting professionalism of its volunteers for Board members and the trail construction/maintenance volunteers who produce amazing results.

My wakeup call was when I queried my hiking friends; not only did most of them have a very limited view of the Trail Conference and its mandate, but many did not go further than pointing out “you get a 10% Camprock discount with Trail Conference membership.”

Early in my membership that tidbit of information was my full understanding as well! It also became apparent to me (as my learning curve rose) that our future success will need constant adaptation to the environment and of our operations as a nonprofit organization. In short, what I quickly learned is:

• the Trail Conference is involved in many more projects than I previously thought;

• in order to operate efficiently, the Trail Conference needs at least double or triple the office flex-space it currently has; we have problems accommodating most functions and meetings, not to mention our paid staff, in a place we can call “home” (and that’s without our anticipated growth);

• expanding and clarifying the perception of the Trail Conference requires a visible “home” that volunteers can work from and the organization needs for future fundraising.

The Darlington Schoolhouse project is just the opportunity we need; it’s not only a win-win situation for Mahwah (our partner in the venture) and the Trail Conference, but for our volunteers, environmentalists, architectural conservationists, historians, etc. – the list is long. AND, the location couldn’t be better: at the gateway to a vast hiking range and in the bucolic setting of Ramapo Reservoir and Ramapo College.

Show your support for our volunteers. Make your gift now at nyntc.org/donatedarlington

The Overgrowth at Mount Bull Hill

A start of the Cornish Trail at the base of Hudson Highlands State Park looks promising. Though maintainers clip period regularly, the greener—much of it prickly multiflora rose—very quickly trails seem to date hikers to pass by. Local trail crew comprising trail maintainers and three employees of NYC Parks, along with the leadership of Head Trails Task Chair, and Fred Stern, East Crew Leader, set out to tame the path, yet simultaneously learn some Advanced Trail techniques and enjoy a good hike on a
Growing a Trail Intern Program

Sterling Forest Interns
Supported by New York State Parks, Sterling Forest State Park, Student Conservation Association’s AmeriCorps, and the Trail Conference.

Jessica Mavec, of Canasties, NY, is a new Sterling Forest State Park School, six will continue through the experience has reinforced his interest in invasive species in our area, and now I notice them growing a Trail Intern Program.

Meet Our Trails Family
These clubs and organizations support the protection, maintenance, and growth of our trail network with their membership in the Trail Conference (recorded as of August 27, 2013). Thank you! Visit nynjtc.org/content/member-clubs to see updated member list with links to their websites.

Don’t see your group here? Contact Membership manager Joanne Reinhardt to learn how you can be part of our growing family of trail supporters. joanne@nynjtc.org or 201.512.9348, ext. 26.

Peter Dolan, New York, NY, graduated in 2010 with a biology degree from Cornell University and brings a variety of training and skills relating to outdoor recreation and education. He has led college freshmen on backpacking trips on the Appalachian Trail; low-performing elementary-age students in California to develop skills and confidence by teaching them outdoor survival skills and nature-focused trail work; and had fond memories of trail work with young people and my interests.

Kevin says he came to Bear Mountain looking to be trained in technical trail work and return to western North Carolina—a rock can I move with a rock bar?”

Growing a Trail Intern Program

The Trail Conference has been exploring ways to involve more people, especially young people, in our work and enhance our overall volunteer training program. One promising avenue is through internships, in which selected individuals commit to volunteer for a specified time frame in exchange for training, mentorship by experienced staff and volunteers, and a small stipend.

This year, we welcomed eight great interns who contributed their energy and enthusiasm to three projects: invasive species monitoring and removal, and trail building at Bear Mountain and Sterling Forest. As this issue of Trail Walker goes to press, two of these young people have returned to school, six will continue through October. We hope to grow our internship program next year and welcome your support.

Invasive Species Interns
Support for these internships came from a McHenry Award by the Open Space Institute, Ben Burton, and Orange and Rockland Utilities.

Keith Shane of Mahwah, NJ, is a student at Cornell University where he is now starting his sophomore year. Keith’s internship with our invasive species program was made possible by his selection as McHenry Award winner in the field of environmental conservation, a program of the Open Space Institute that recognizes young leaders of “exceptional vision.” Keith first volunteered for the Trail Conference in 2010 when he was volunteer coordinator for MEOV (Mahwah Environmental Volunteer Organization), a student group. His project goal was to expand our outreach to control invasives in the Palisades Interstate Park Commission and Taconic State Park regions. The highlight, he says, was getting to “know the plants that are out there. It brings a whole new awareness to hiking.”

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Have you seen this tree on the trails? The Trail Conference’s Invasive Strike Force is on the hunt for populations of Japanese angelica tree (Aralia elata), also known as devil’s walking stick or Hercules’ club. This invasive species is rapidly expanding in our area and volunteers from the Trail Conference’s Invasive Strike Force are out to stop it.

Japanese angelica tree is a small- to medium-sized tree with prickly thorns all along its stem. The leaves are large with multiple leaflets and have a vertical thorn at junctions in the leaves—a very unusual characteristic.

This tree is native to Japan, Korea, and eastern Russia and was introduced into the United States in the early 1800s. Due to its similarity to a native southern species called devil’s walking stick (Aralia spinosa), the spread of Japanese angelica tree in the northeast was at first thought to be simply a range expansion of the devil’s walking stick. However, closer inspection of populations in New Jersey and New York by Brooklyn Botanical Garden botanists determined that it was in fact the non-native angelica tree. The range of the native devil’s walking stick reaches only as far north as Delaware and Maryland.

The seeds are berries that are eaten and spread by birds, so Japanese angelica trees have a wide range on roadsides and fields and in newly disturbed soil. The plant also reproduces by sending up sprouts from its roots and it grows rapidly. Left unchecked, large thickets will develop over time.

The Japanese angelica populations are quite extensive in Sterling Forest and Harriman State Park / Bear Mountain (Orange County, NY). Scattered populations have been reported from Ward Pound Ridge Reservation and Tuxedo Lake Reservation in Westchester County, various parks in Rockland County, and Storm King State Park (Orange County). In New Jersey there have been reports from the Palisades area in Bergen County, New Jersey State Forest in Passaic County, several parks in Morris County, and various locations across central New Jersey.

Close-up of Aralia elata thorns on stem

What to do if you find this plant?

Try to get a GPS location or at least a photo of where it is on a map (there are several apps that can be used on smartphones, including our own PDF Maps app for iPhone). Send me a report at lrohleder@nyntc.org; a photo is also helpful. If you’re a maintainer and you find this plant on your trail, all the better to eat it. Cutting the plant results in a very strong regrowth response and many sprouts from the roots. Contact me to see if our Invasive Strike Force Trail Crew can be scheduled to take care of it.

—Linda Rohleder, PhD
Invasives Strike Force Manager

Vote for the future by making your gift now at nyntc.org/donatedarlington

Robert Ross
Life Member
Franklin Lakes, NJ

Cherishing the work for 50 years, wanting it to keep the pace

I got involved with the Trail Conference in the 1960s and had the pleasure of a friendship with Bill Hoeferlin, who created maps that were the predecessors to the Trail Conference’s award-winning trail map enterprise. I have always cherished the work of the Trail Conference because they create the trails I love. It has been a miracle to live in various locations across this vast metropolis and still be able to enjoy the solitude of open space where I can appreciate the beauty and diversity that nature has to offer.

It’s easy to take for granted that access to open space will always be available, but without the Trail Conference, I know that the trail system would crumble into disrepair. Across the region, the Trail Conference provides a quality of life that millions have enjoyed decade after decade.

The need for well-trained volunteers has outstripped the Trail Conference’s office space in Mahwah, NJ, which is far too small to accommodate a regular curriculum of volunteer training workshops. In fact, the current space is insufficient even for regular staff and office volunteers. That is why we are renovating the 1891 Darlington Schoolhouse in Mahwah into the new Trail Conference headquarters and state-of-the-art training center.

Vote for the future by making your gift now at nyntc.org/donatedarlington
TW: How did you decide to do a cross-country hike? 

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TRIBUNES

Hike the Shawangunk Ridge with Free Maps

Just in time for the fall hiking season, all-new maps of the Shawangunk Ridge Trail are now available online! The maps cover the Shawangunk Ridge Trail from its southern terminus in High Point State Park to the northern terminus in High Bridge. Since the first edition of these maps in 2008, a number of major trail changes and development have occurred within the boundaries of the Shawangunk Ridge. This second edition now correctly shows the recently relocated Appalachian Trail spur that utilises a 4.5-mile ridge-top parcel (purchased in part by the Trail Conference last year) to join the Shawangunk Ridge Trail further south than previously.

Extensions to trails in the Huckleberry Preserve (formerly known as the Fall Croton and Huckleberry) combined with the addition of the D&H Canal Path through Orange and Sullivan counties that have recently been made public are also included. Much of the Shawangunk Ridge Trail and surrounding trails have been re-GPSed to improve accuracy. Additional road labels have been added to the maps to make it easier to get to the trails, and over 75 new features have been added to the maps since the first edition in 2008. A free, downloadable PDF version of the maps is now available as a free 8.5"x11" PDFs that can be easily downloaded and printed. The maps can be found on the Trail Conference’s section of our website: nynjtc.org/view/maps.

More details and a complete list of features on the maps can be found at nynjtc.org/dw/trail-maps.
Beacon Press, 2013
Reviewed by Georgette Weir

Christine Byl, a professional trail builder and writer who lives in Alaska, in a house in what some might consider to be the “Ivy League” of trail campuses: Glacier and Denali National Parks. Although her education in what some might consider to be "the Ivy League" of trail campuses: Glacier and Denali National Parks, the experience of trail work with its rigors, is a specific tool is presented as an easy to use.

Jeff Alt, a professional trail builder and writer who lives in Alaska, in a house in what some might consider to be the “Ivy League” of trail campuses: Glacier and Denali National Parks. Although her education in what some might consider to be "the Ivy League" of trail campuses: Glacier and Denali National Parks, the experience of trail work with its rigors, is a specific tool is presented as an easy to use.
A “For Sale” sign had graced the entry to Mystery Point Road in Philipstown, NY for some time. The historic 129-acre property was purchased for protection in 1990 by the Open Space Institute (OSI) and Scenic Hudson.

After acquiring the parcel, OSI and Scenic Hudson worked on an adaptive re-use plan for the property to provide the greatest public benefit. Scottish architect Jon Stryker of Kalamazoo, MI. He is an architect and a leading philanthropist in the Hudson announced the sale of the site to the Hudson Highlands Land Trust for some time.

The parcel’s parking area on Mystery Point Road and extensive network of public trails, including on-foot access to the Hudson River will continue to be managed by the Open Space Institute, and the Trail Conference will continue to maintain the trails. In July, volunteers from our East Hudson crews laid out and cleared a new trail, blazed blue, to close a gap created by the need to circumvent the residential area. In addition, a trail section marked on our 2012 East Hudson Map 101 as red, has been changed to blue to create a single blue loop with a red connector trail west of the trail route (see map). The Jolly Rovers volunteer trail crew scheduled to build two short rock stairs on a ridge near the river. The trail hardening will help prevent erosion.

We’re thrilled that this sweet little preserve, accessible by car and by Metro-North Hudson Line train, has been preserved and remains open for public use and we thank and congratulate all who made it happen.

To find detailed directions for a 4-mile hike on trails here (including car and train directions), go to Find a Hike on our website and search for Manitou Point Preserve.

Support Trails, Parks and Open Space in the New York-New Jersey region by joining the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference.

The Trail Conference maintains more than 2,000 miles of trails, advocates for parks, protects open space, and provides volunteer service opportunities in the great outdoors.

Your membership supports the trails you love and gives you these additional benefits: Go to nynjtc.org/membership

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Access to a wide range of volunteer opportunities on-trail and off-trail. Visit nynjtc.org/volunteer

Find links to all these and more at nynjtc.org.

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2,000 miles of trails; your membership helps us expand our horizons.

Included with membership, Trail Walker, 10% discount on purchases at many outdoor stores, and 25% discount on all Trail Conference maps and books purchased directly from the Trail Conference. Save time and a tree by joining or renewing online at nynjtc.org. Just click on the Join/Renew Now button.

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To order maps, send to: NY-NJ Trail Conference, and mail to: 156 Ramapo Valley Road, Mahwah, NJ 07430.

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Find all our publications, and select trail guides from others, on our website, and get your 25% member discount!

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