



# TRAIL WALKER

NEW YORK-NEW JERSEY TRAIL CONFERENCE • CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH NATURE SINCE 1920

## Celebrating Our Volunteers

MYRA ROMANO



Sam's Point, Minnewaska State Park Preserve

On June 2, 2022 the Trail Conference held its annual Volunteer Appreciation Event virtually to recognize a number of volunteers who were nominated to receive awards for going above and beyond in their roles as volunteers. We thank all 2,000+ volunteers at the Trail Conference, and congratulate the recipients of the following awards:

**HIT THE GROUND RUNNING AWARD:** Bong Kim, Werner Mueller, Thea Landesburg, Peter Stoj, Nancy Bachana, Irene Sheldon, Nicole Wright, Lily Mehl, Rudy Kircher, Delia Kulukundis

**GOING THE EXTRA MILE AWARD:** Eric Friedman, John Fudala, Michael Pashley, Willard Dye, David Haas, Dan Hoberman

**DEDICATED SERVICE AWARD:** Ed Benvenga, Cathie Swyka, Steve Goldberg, George Prokopiak, Paul Bisset, Mary Ayers, James

Nolan, Ed Walsh, Phyllis Iannello, Joanne Beliveau, Brian Collins, Tom Conway

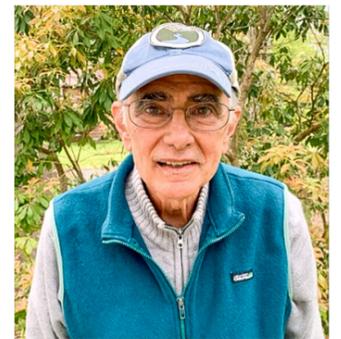
**RISING LEADER AWARD:** Matt Smith, Phil Heidelberger, Ed Spirko, Bill and Linda Taggart

**THE MAJOR WILLIAM A. WELCH AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING PARTNER:** Diane Alden

**THE KEN LLOYD AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING MEMBER CLUB:** Kim Levinsky (Sassquad Trail Running Club)

**THE ELIZABETH LEVERS AWARD FOR ENGAGEMENT AND INCLUSIVITY** Lou Baldanza

**"As long as I can, I will."** Neversink Gorge Trail Supervisor Lou Baldanza is 77 years old and can be found on the trails most days out of the week either taking care of the trails and engaging the



public — whether it's picking up litter, trail maintenance, or answering questions for new hikers. Lou's enthusiasm for the Neversink area and hiking is infectious and he encourages those who are less than confident in their hiking abilities to take it slower and enjoy the peace and quiet. Lou is also mindful of making sure others feel included during hikes through conversation and keeping pace with them. And with that attitude Lou has gathered hikers through outreach beyond the membership and shown them the beauty of the Neversink.

## Welcome to Our New 2022 Volunteer Leaders!



**KATIE KOURAKOS**  
VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT  
MANAGER

Through our 102 years, the Trail Conference has relied on our volunteers to help us fulfill our mission of connecting people with nature in their numerous roles—whether it's trail volunteer, invasive surveys, cartography and publications, or perhaps behind the scenes at our committees—volunteers have helped guide

the organization through its various iterations. One of the most important roles however has been the volunteer leader.

Our volunteer leaders provide the necessary connection between boots on the ground volunteers to staff and other partners or volunteers. They provide the vision for big picture plans, while lending support and assistance to their fellow volunteers. Volunteer leaders exemplify leadership, great communication, and

teambuilding skills. In our ever-changing world, we can rely on our volunteer leaders to be stewards of the land, ensuring that trails and their adjacent lands remain accessible and enjoyable for all.

We're pleased to announce the following volunteer leaders who have stepped up to their respective roles in 2022:

**LOCAL TRAIL COMMITTEE CHAIRS (LTCs)**  
**Ed Spirko:** West Hudson

Southern. Ed's region covers Harriman and Bear Mountain State Parks, Kakiat State Park, and Sterling Forest State Park.

**Dan Hoberman:** Central North Jersey South. Dan's region encompasses Pyramid Mountain, Mountainside Park, and Morristown National Historic Park.

**Sam Litton:** Catskills Lean-to. Sam, along with Assistant Lean-to Chair Snapper Petta, oversee the 16 lean-tos in the Catskills region.

### SUPERVISORS

**Kevin Kasica, co-supervisor:** North Jersey, Southern Wyanokies  
**Barry Reed:** Central North Jersey Northern, Pequannock Watershed  
**Frank Maccreery:** Catskills, Belleayre  
**Charles Whitaker:** Long Path Catskills, Phoenicia to Palenville  
**Todd Finger:** West Hudson Southern, Harriman State Park (Central)  
**Maggie Dock:** Northeast Jersey, Garret Mountain and Rifle Camp Park  
**Bruce Thaler:** Northeast Jersey, Ramapo Mountain State Forest  
**Steve Jauch:** Catskills, Hunter-West Kill  
**Ethan Glanning:** West Hudson, Shawangunk Ridge Trail (High Point to Rt. 211)  
**Joe Motisi:** Northeast Jersey, Habitat Helpers Leader

### WHAT'S INSIDE:

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# Trail Conference Awarded Athletic Brewing Two for the Trails Grant



**JACQUELINE HANLEY**  
GRANTS AND CONTRACTS  
MANAGER

We are excited that the Athletic Brewing Company selected the Trail Conference as a recipient of their Two for the Trails grant program. The generous \$5,000 grant will help fund trail improvements in the Northern Region NJ State Parks with minimal project restrictions, which is incredibly valuable for the work we do—this flexibility allows us to respond to emerging needs, storm events, and other priorities identified

by our volunteers. Unrestricted funds make it possible for us to act quickly in the face of emergencies and do work where it's needed most. Our planned work utilizing the Two for the Trails award includes continuing to explore new and intuitive loop-style trail configurations to make circular hikes and navigation easier than ever. This follows a Two for the Trails grant received in 2021 for crucial trail improvements in Harriman-Bear Mountain State Parks.

Athletic Brewing, a non-alcoholic beer company dedi-



cated to making craft brews, received 190 applications from around the globe with requests totaling \$6.2 million in 2022.

Their mission is to positively impact the health and happiness of their customers, while greatly impacting their communities and environment for the better. The Two for the Trails program is a cornerstone of their mission where they donate 2% of all sales to the program with the commitment "we are excited to help wherever our communities need us."

We are thankful for this support! See the Trail Conference and the exciting work Athletic Brewing generously aids here: [athleticbrewing.com/pages/two-for-the-trails](https://athleticbrewing.com/pages/two-for-the-trails)

## News in Brief

### Thanks to All Who Attended and Contributed to Our Annual Gala

We had a wonderful event on October 15th in the beautiful Rio Vista Clubhouse. Over 150 individuals celebrated extraordinary Trail Families, who help safeguard our trails, so future generations may bond with nature, learn to value it—and pass their environmental values on to the next generation. It was our pleasure to honor the DeSilva family and the Gunzler family for their exemplary environmental leadership as dedicated stewards and advocates in protecting the land we love to explore.

A huge thank you to everyone who attended, provided financial support, donated goods and services and helped the day of the event. We're grateful to our sponsors and those who donated and supported the auction. You can still participate in the auction, [32auctions.com/tc-gala22](https://32auctions.com/tc-gala22) until November 6th.

### Welcome, New Staff Members!

**Zachary Cole**  
Long-Distance Trails Program Coordinator

**Ben Copp**  
Advancement & Store Associate

**Bob Delap**  
Field Trail Builder

**Dr. Devin DiGiacopo**  
Aquatic Invasive Species Program Coordinator

**Jacqueline Hanley**  
Grant & Contract Manager

**Katie Kourakos**  
Volunteer Engagement Manager

**Ashley Nester**  
Community Outreach Coordinator

**Myra Romano**  
Trail Steward Program Coordinator

**Krysti Sabins**  
Stewardship Communications Coordinator

Visit [nynjtc.org/about-us](https://nynjtc.org/about-us) to learn more.



GEORGETTE WEIR

## Working With Land Managers Workshops

Two classroom workshops this winter will teach attendees about navigating the bureaucracy required to turn good ideas into trail reality. Focus will be on developing working relationships with land managers, project proposal and review process, and implementation. Emphasis will be on NYS Parks, but other agencies will also be covered.

- Dec 3rd: Sterling Forest State Park
- Dec. 10th: Hudson Highlands State Park

Dates and venue subject to change. Perfect for new friends groups or anyone looking to think big! Look for the listings and sign up at [nynjtc.org/events](https://nynjtc.org/events) or email [volunteer@nynjtc.org](mailto:volunteer@nynjtc.org) to learn more!

## In Memoriam

### Ike Siskind

Our longtime volunteer, Ike Siskind, passed away in November 2021. He was a trail maintainer and supervisor in Harriman State Park. In 1997 the NYNJTC presented Ike and his wife, Marilyn, with the William Hoeflerin Award in recognition of their outstanding contributions to the maintenance and management of regional hiking trails.

Ike was one of the first recipients of the ADK North Jersey—Ramapo Chapter's Lifetime Volunteer Award in recognition of his many years of outstanding service with the Ramapo Chapter. As a member of that chapter, he served in various roles including President, Vice President and Hike Chair, while leading innumerable hikes throughout those years. On his 82nd birthday he led a hike, "Pyngyp, the Easy Way."

Ike was a member of the Catskill 3500 Club and was an Adirondack 46er. He hiked renowned peaks around the world, including the Matterhorn in Switzerland. Besides being an accomplished hiker, Ike



was a nationally ranked swimmer in his age group for a variety of strokes. One day, Ike was all smiles. In a seniors aged swim meet he had beat someone he could never beat in high school.

In addition to Marilyn, his wife of 65 years, Ike is survived by two sons and four grandchildren.

Many in the trails community have been touched by Ike's wry wit, kindness and enthusiasm.

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## TRAIL WALKER

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### MISSION STATEMENT

The New York-New Jersey Trail Conference is a volunteer-powered organization that builds, maintains, and protects public trails. Together with our partners, we strive to ensure that the trails and natural areas we share are sustainable and accessible for all to enjoy for generations to come.

The New York-New Jersey Trail Conference is a volunteer, non-profit 501 (c)(3) organization.

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# AISF Crew Works to Protect the Endangered Northern Cricket Frog

**KRYSTI SABINS**  
STEWARDSHIP COMMUNICATIONS  
COORDINATOR

Recently, endangered species conservation and invasive species management converged for our Aquatics Invasives Strike Force (AISF) crew. In 2019, the AISF crew managed an infestation of invasive water chestnut at a lake in Orange County. This year, the crew planned to return to complete surveys via rake toss as well as pull out any remaining water chestnut. However, after conducting a bit of research, Aquatic Invasive Species Program Coordinator, Devin DiGiacopo, Ph.D., discovered that this lake was, in fact, home to the endangered northern cricket frog!

The northern cricket frog is one of New York's smallest vertebrates at only 1 inch in length. Listed as an endangered species in the state, this



particular frog predominantly utilizes aquatic vegetation as both its habitat and breeding ground.

After reviewing the species recovery plan which explicitly stated that pulling floating plants could be detrimental to these frogs, Devin reached out to the NYS DEC for guidance.

With assistance from DEC Wildlife Technician, Callie Barth-Dwyer, the AISF crew ventured to the lake for visual and auditory surveys. These

surveys would help determine whether there was an overlap between the invasive water chestnut infestation and northern cricket frog territory—and whether the frogs' population had been affected by the 2019 water chestnut removal.

After completing a visual survey of the lake, determining the densely (and natively!) vegetated south end was premier cricket frog habitat, the crew waited until after sunset

to conduct a frog call survey.

When they ventured to the same south end of the lake, the crew heard a cacophony of sounds including green frogs, gray tree frogs, bullfrogs, and, of course, northern cricket frogs! The breeding call of these cricket frogs, which sounds like two marbles clicking together, was at the highest rating of intensity for the survey out of all species present. The high presence of cricket frogs in this native plant-populated area of the lake was encouraging. This observation signified a lack of overlap between cricket frogs and water chestnut, hopefully indicating that previous and future water chestnut removal efforts by the AISF crew are not detrimental to this species. With this data set, the AISF crew can now work on a management plan that ensures this tiny amphibian has continued success at this site.



## Subaru Shares Commitment to Great Trails

Subaru is committed to giving back to local charities and doing their part to protect the environment. And thanks to the generosity of the Liberty Family of Dealerships and Subaru of America's annual Share the Love event, more than \$127,000 has been donated to the Trail Conference since 2020. This philanthropic spirit is helping improve our trails with generous unrestricted funds in support of the Trail Conference mission.

This year's Share the Love event runs from November 17, 2022, through January 3, 2023. Liberty Subaru in Emerson, New Jersey, has named the Trail Conference as a Hometown Charity for the fourth year in a row and will donate \$250 to the charity designated by each buyer/lessee for every new vehicle purchased or leased at Liberty Subaru. The Liberty Family of Dealerships will also "share the love" at Liberty Hyundai and Genesis in Mahwah, and Liberty Kia in Ramsey.

Don't forget that Trail Conference members get dealer's invoice pricing on Subaru, Hyundai, Kia, and Genesis vehicles at Liberty dealerships. This offer applies to the purchase of any new vehicle or leased at any of the four Liberty franchises, except for special edition or low availability vehicles. The Liberty discount entitles Trail Conference members in good standing to purchase the vehicle they choose (subject to the previously mentioned restrictions) at an amount equal to the dealer's invoice price.

Our thanks to Liberty and everyone who chooses to support the Trail Conference!

Jacqueline Hanley, Grants and Contracts Manager



From left: Bob Boyle, Frank McNulty, Brian Mulraney, and Roland Breault

## Happy Trails to Frank after two-plus decades of service

Frank "Irish" McNulty will be resigning from his position as a maintainer of the Pochuck Boardwalk in Vernon, N.J., after decades of volunteer service.

The Boardwalk is probably the section of the Appalachian Trail in New Jersey that receives more use than any other section. It is the quintessential example of a multi-use recreational trail — something that is unusual for the AT.

In addition to thru hikers and those out for the day to trek to the Pinwheel Vista, the Boardwalk attracts joggers, birders, dog walkers, families with young children and casual strollers. During the height of the hiking season, the

Boardwalk requires at least weekly maintenance.

For well over two decades Frank has been the face of the Trail Conference on the Pochuck Boardwalk, weed-wacking, collecting litter, checking privies, and answering questions from the hiking public. In a single season, Frank would rack up hundreds of hours of volunteer time maintaining the Boardwalk.

The New Jersey AT community of volunteers and the entire Trail Conference thank Frank for his decades of volunteer service and wish him the best. Frank, your constant presence and tireless work at the Pochuck Boardwalk will be sorely missed.

Steve Weissman



REI staff and our Invasives Strike Force Crew filled bags with garlic mustard.

## REI Joins Invasives Strike Force Crew for Day of Volunteer Service

On June 12, our Invasives Strike Force (ISF) crew partnered with REI for a workday at New York-New Jersey Trail Conference Headquarters. The day started with a meet and greet with Conservation Dog, Peat. Peat and Arden Blumenthal, the Conservation Dogs Program Coordinator explained (and demonstrated) some of the training methods they use to identify invasive species. REI and the Invasive Strike Force crew then received a safety and education lesson from Terrestrial Invasive Species Project Coordinator, Ryan Goolic McClean on the types of invasives they may encounter during their volunteer workday. With that, REI and the ISF crew together removed enough invasive garlic mustard to fill nine large trash bags! Big thank you to REI staff for their help in removing this unwanted species so natives can once again become established in this area. Special thank you, also, to our ISF crew and Ryan, and a shoutout to our Conservation Dog team, Peat and Arden! We are looking forward to working with REI again in the fall for another meaningful — and fun — volunteer day!

Katie Kourakos



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# New Initiative Brings Volunteers and Corps Members Together



**VICTORIA FINN**  
CONSERVATION CORPS  
MANAGER

To support the amazing work of our volunteers, in 2021 the Trail Conference created a new initiative, called the “Special Projects,” which created meaningful face-to-face interactions between Corps members and volunteer leaders. Throughout the years, the Trail Conference Conservation Corps and the volunteer leaders lacked significant opportunities to share their work and experiences. This new initiative allows different parts of the organization to get to know one another better.

From time to time, volunteer leaders struggle to find enough people with the experience necessary to complete all of their projects. This is Corps members now step in via the “Special Projects” initiative! Even though Corps members must complete specific projects required by

AmeriCorps and our park partners, they can now more easily dedicate some of their valuable time to other worthwhile work and training. Furthermore, volunteer leaders now have a streamlined process to request help from corps members on small projects that can benefit from a few extra hands.

The 2021 season had many successes with this initiative! The six members of the Taconic Crew spent the day at Fahnestock State Park with Trail Supervisor John Magerlein installing stepping stones through a particularly wet section of trail. This workday allowed a longstanding water problem to be addressed and the crew had a great time getting to put their skills to use at a new site. The Trail Stewards worked on a multi-day collaboration on the Devil’s Path with volunteer supervisors. They removed dirt and debris off 100 stone steps on the trail heading up to Plateau

Mountain and repaired seven water management sites, such as water bars and diversion trenches.

The Trail Conference wants the corps members to get to know the incredible volunteers that have dedicated so much of their life to the trails that we all love. It is a great opportunity for them to learn while also providing essential helping hands that our volunteers need.

The Special Projects give corps members experience with new settings and people beyond their regular program, and ideally, allowing them to learn new skills or have a unique experience learning from veteran Trail Conference volunteers. Alternatively, if it’s work that they’re experienced in, it may instead give members a chance to apply the skills they already have to a new setting and highlight their skills. We are thrilled to have this be a permanent part of our organization!

## WTEC Improvements



Volunteers at the Welch Trail Education Center sprung right into action this past spring with major improvements in the bathroom. New bathroom stalls were made and a new laundry room was designed. The AmeriCorps residents this year are really appreciating all their hard work! Many thanks to Bong Kim, Tim Yang, C. Mark Overton, Devon DiGiacopo, and Rich and Ember Baker.

Several cabins have been getting some much-needed attention this summer. Painting three of the lake side cabins is being accomplished by volunteers and

AmeriCorps members on their day off. Another cabin, in much need of restoration from years of water damage, is getting fixed by volunteer, Bong Kim. This cabin will be next in line to get painted to protect the siding for years to come.

Additionally, the garden in front of the main hall got a makeover this spring thanks to Linda and Tim Yang. And new doors for the boathouse, made by volunteer Steve Howard, were installed by Bong Kim.

Thank you everyone for all your hard work and dedication!

Nancy Krause

# NY, NJ Volunteer Trail Leaders Needed

The Trail Conference is supported by more than 1,700 volunteers who annually donate over 93,000 hours of time to keep trails open, safe, and enjoyable for the public. Many of our on-the-ground volunteers work directly with our Volunteer Leaders who volunteer their time in a specific area across the region that the Trail Conference covers. Our Lead-

ers are empowered to lead and organize projects, work directly with our partners, think about big picture planning for a particular area, and to work with staff to build community for the volunteers out on the trails.

The role of a Volunteer Leader is a key part of the puzzle that keeps our system and structure functioning properly so when

there is a vacant position there is a noticeable impact in a region or park, and more specifically on the trails. Our volunteers are an essential aspect of the organization and without your work, passion, and dedication our small staff would not be able to keep up the demand that is required to keep trails open, safe, and enjoyable.

There are Volunteer Trail

Leader opportunities available across both New York and New Jersey, from the Catskill mountains and Westchester County in New York to the Delaware Water Gap in New Jersey. If you are interested in learning more about our Volunteer Leader positions or other volunteer opportunities, visit [nynjtc.org/volunteer-now](http://nynjtc.org/volunteer-now).

Melissa Cascini

## NEW YORK OPPORTUNITIES

### Dry Brook Ridge North Trail Supervisor

The Dry Brook Ridge North Trail Supervisor region covers a lesser traveled area of the western Catskills Forest Preserve. The area features the Huckleberry Loop that traverses some of the lower mountains in the area while also following Dry Brook Ridge to showcase views of the rolling hills of the western Catskills. The position gives the opportunity to oversee trail maintenance on nearly 14 miles of trail over this forested terrain with a team of devoted trail maintainers and NYS Department of Environmental Conservation staff. Join this enthusiastic team of volunteers to keep trails in this region open for all to use!

### Schunemunk Trail Supervisor

Schunemunk State Park features unique geographical rock formations, vast views of the Hudson Valley and Catskills mountains, rolling meadows, and cascading waterfalls. The individual who takes on the Trail Supervisor position for this area has the opportunity to oversee the maintenance for the trails that provide access to these amazing features throughout the park, which include approximately 20 miles of trail. In this role you work with the park manager, a team of trail maintainers, other volunteer leaders, and Trail Conference staff to keep trails safe and accessible for trail users. Don’t miss out on the opportunity to volunteer in this unique area!

### West Hudson North Trail Chair

The West Hudson North region covers trails in Minnewaska State Park, Storm King State Park, Schunemunk State Park, and Black Rock Forest in the lower Hudson Valley. The region covers varying terrain from sweeping views of the Hudson River to the rocky ridges of the Shawangunk Ridge and cascading waterfalls found throughout this area. In addition to the draw of the beautiful landscapes, this position also works alongside a dedicated group of volunteer Trail Supervisors, the Hudson Nor’Westers Volunteer Trail Crew, and park partners to tackle maintenance and trail projects.

### Southern Shawangunks Trail Chair

The Southern Shawangunks region spans from the New York/New Jersey border at High Point State Park, north to Shawangunk Ridge State Forest, and west to the Neversink River Unique Area. The Trail Chair for this region works hand-in-hand with the Trail Supervisors who oversee maintenance on sections of the Shawangunk Ridge Trail, which stretches for 71 miles from High Point State Park following the scenic ridge through state forests and parks up to Minnewaska State Park and Mohonk Preserve. The geographical area that this position covers becomes drastically different when you venture to the Neversink River Unique Area, which is home to spectacular gorges, several waterfalls, and lush forests. Take on this Volunteer Leader role to work with a great group of volunteers, Trail Conference staff, park managers, and to experience the varying terrain that western NY has to offer!

## NEW JERSEY OPPORTUNITIES

### North Jersey Trail Chair

The North Jersey region includes Norvin Green State Forest, Long Pond Ironworks State Park, Ramapo Mountain State Park, and Ringwood State Park. The North Jersey Trail Chair will work closely with NJDEP, park partners, and Trail Supervisors and Maintainers to ensure the historic and rugged trails of Northern NJ are accessible and sustainable for all trail users. Taking on this position creates the opportunity to play a role in protecting some of NJ’s hidden treasures like the scenic panoramas from Wyanokie Point in Norvin Green State Forest and the 120-acre mountain lake in Ramapo Mountain State Forest. No matter if you’re an avid birder, hiker, mountain biker, history buff or all-round nature enthusiast, this role ideal for anyone looking to get involved in preserving Northern NJ’s natural history.

## THANK YOU TO OUR TRAIL CONFERENCE VOLUNTEERS

# Celebrating the Work of Invasives Strike Force Volunteer Crew Leader Rich Rockwell



**BRENT BOSCARINO**  
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF  
STEWARDSHIP

Rich Rockwell has been a truly incredible addition to the Trail Conference's Stewardship programming. Rich has shown seemingly boundless energy, enthusiasm, and capacity for contributing to protecting our trails and natural areas through ecological stewardship work with a focus on invasive species monitoring and management. Rich first started work with the Trail Conference in 2017, as part of the Lenape Trail project. He was involved as a partner via the Morris Canal Greenway Committee, and later became more directly involved with the Lenape Trail Committee via work on the Lenape Trail Guide. Rich began volunteering with the Invasives Strike Force (ISF) program as an invasives surveyor in 2019. He very quickly demonstrated mastery of the identification and reporting of 14 common invasive species as part of our ISF-Standard Surveyor and



Volunteer Rich Rockwell utilizes the app Seek to identify the invasive plant black jetbead.

EcoQuest Programs and later challenged himself to become an expert in 11 emerging invasive species, a feat that usually takes beginning surveyors multiple years to achieve.

Rich's burgeoning passion for invasive species management fully materialized in 2020 when he trained with our Invasives Strike Force Conservation Corps to become licensed to apply pesticides and lead volunteer workdays. He

is now leading the way as our first-ever volunteer-led Invasives Strike Force Crew leader. Since 2020, Rich has successfully led over 20 workdays in Harriman State Park in New York as well as in Swartswood State Park, Pyramid Mountain, High Point State Park and South Mountain Reservation in New Jersey. In 2022, he also launched a project in collaboration with Ramapo College and their internship

and grants programs to survey, monitor and manage invasive species in Paterson Great Falls National Historic Park, focusing especially in the meadows of the raceways (one of the key public features of the park) to allow the native species there to flourish.

Rich's growing volunteer portfolio doesn't stop there. He is also currently working with Friends of Watsessing Park in Essex County on an experimental, more targeted approach to sustainably and responsibly treat Japanese knotweed, a notoriously difficult invasive plant to manage due to its ability to spread through fragmentation and via rhizomes. Most recently, he engaged with partners at Rutgers University and the Alfonso F. Bonsal Preserve in Montclair, NJ to organize volunteer workdays and set priorities and methods for treatment of a suite of invasive plants on the preserve. Rich is also involved in the Essex County Native Plant Society and will be leading tours of his small

forest regeneration projects where he had nearly cleared out knotweed and knocked back invasive honeysuckle. In these invasive plants' stead, there is now native white snakeroot, fleabane, wood asters and goldenrod growing in addition to a nice stand of wild sarsaparilla!

It is hard to overstate the importance of Rich's impact on the Trail Conference's Stewardship programs. We now can expand invasives management and removal work to parks and trails in NJ, helping to protect highly valued natural areas in parks throughout the state (as our current Conservations Corps Invasives Strike Force crew is restricted to working in NY). Rich's rapid development as a trusted volunteer and leader is a true testament to his love and dedication to our programs, but more importantly, to protecting the lands we love. The path he has blazed will continue to serve as a model for expansion of our volunteer-led ISF Crew programs into the future.

## Your Trail Family Makes Your Next Adventure Possible

With so many parks in our region, it's easy to assume trails will always survive on their own. But trails and your access to nature depend on the constant presence, labor, and actions of volunteer-supporters like Juan Melli.

Juan fell in love with the local trails after catching the hiking bug from trips to the Sierra Nevada. With fresh eyes, he discovered the rugged Appalachian Trail, wide-open views of the Wyanokies, solitude of the Pequannock Watershed, dramatic cliffs of the Palisades, and countless parks rich with scenery, wildlife, and history.

"I kept finding new adventures using my Trail Conference maps. And the tagline,



Juan Melli

'Made by the People Who Build the Trails,' made me realize that these paths don't just maintain themselves. It's the people of the volunteer-based Trail Conference who build and maintain the 2,000+ miles of trails I walk. They have given me so much."

Thanks to our volunteer-supporters that allow the Trail Conference to continue to protect trails—as well as green corridors, native plants, and more. Our robust trail network also ensures that future generations can bond with nature, so they learn to value it—and pass those values on.

## Investing in Healthy Trail Networks for All to Enjoy

Whenever you need to connect with nature, the Trail Conference is there for you. Our maintainers ensure that the trails you love are cared for. Trail builders repair worn paths and construct new ones, to keep your adventures safe and enjoyable. And our citizen scientists protect and restore native habitats on the lands you explore. We are the guardians of a century-old trail infrastructure that, frankly, is under great strain to keep up with demand.

As we welcome fall, even more people will explore the trails under our care. More people means more impact—which is why our vigilance in studying usage, assessing its effects, and implementing sustainable solutions is so crucial.

Volunteer-supporters Georg Budenbender and Dr.



Georg Budenbender and Dr. Katy Elwyn

Katy Elwyn believe in investing in healthy trail networks. These outdoor enthusiasts experienced first-hand the responsiveness of the Trail Conference. Within six days of reporting a major trail obstruction in Hudson Highlands State Park, volunteer sawyer Phil Heidelberger cleared the area over a holiday weekend in the winter and effectively communicated the resolution

back to Georg and Katy. Besides impacting the user experience, if left unattended, trail users would have unintentionally widened the trail by going around, disrupting the surrounding natural ecosystem.

Join them investing in healthy trail networks and helping the Trail Conference spring into action whenever challenges that impact trails arise.



## Making Time to Maintain Trails

Jessica Simeo, a young, active member of the Trail Conference and trail running community, has taken to heart her commitment to giving back to trails.

Despite the time demands of work, married life, and a grueling ultramarathon training schedule, Jessi-

ca somehow finds time to maintain three trails. In the Delaware Water Gap, she enthusiastically greets and educates the public as the maintainer of the wildly popular Mount Tammany trail. She also cares for two trails in the quiet, northern NJ Highlands. Jessica maintains the

very challenging, lightly used Westbrook Connector trail as well as northern half of the Manaticut Point trail, which are both located in northern Norvin Green State Forest.

Thank you, Jessica for all your hard work and commitment to keeping trails safe, open and litter free!

# PSAR: Preventative Search and Rescue

It is a crisp April Saturday. You step outside to get the mail and a wave of nostalgic spring scents crash into you. You reflexively smile as the warm sunshine on your face causes you to squint and welcomes you outside. You've been cooped up all winter and have no plans for the rest of the day so the thought of squeezing in a quick local hike pops into your mind. Your pack is calling to you from the coat closet where you left it after your last hike in November. You grab your pack, cell phone, and keys and head out the door. Ten minutes later you realize you scored as you pull into the practically empty parking lot at the popular county park you've hiked in countless times. You will have nature to yourself as the rest of the world toils away at work.

It's 3 p.m. as you head down the yellow trail with a plan to connect to the blue, white, black dot on orange, and then back to yellow on a 3-hour loop you've hiked many times in years past. Your mind wanders as you push your pace feeling good about the extra exercise you are sneaking in.

About two hours into your hike you get that all too familiar panicky jolt back to reality. You've been daydreaming instead of paying attention



to the trail. You look up from the ground and scan the trees for a trail blaze but see none. This is nothing new. You are an experienced hiker and you always find the blazes again. You expand your search to the sides and behind with no luck. You are definitely on a trail so you curse some unknown trail maintainer for not blazing the trail very well. You continue down the trail for a while paying much closer attention to your surroundings as you search for a blaze. No blaze appears but you arrive at a fork presenting you with two unmarked trails to continue. Instead of throwing caution to the wind, you decide to turn around and find your way back

the way you came. Twenty minutes later, with no blaze in sight, you are again presented with a choice of two unmarked trails. Adrenaline surges as you realize you are in trouble.

The sky is now a golden orange. You feel a chilling breeze as the wind picks up and you become aware that you had been sweating more than you realized. You take out your phone to call a friend but you have no cell signal. You launch your digital map app to help find your way but your phone powers off. It had been searching for a cell signal the entire hike. You rifle through your pack only to realize you never went through it before you left. You have no extra layers and your flashlight is dead. You never changed the batteries after they died on your hike last November. As the moonless sky inks over you sit down on a cold rock, curl up tight to stave off your shivering, and you try to come to terms that nobody knows where you are.

Nobody wants to be that hiker. Search and rescue teams have found, after analyzing many incidents like the one above, that there is almost always a chain of errors that leads to the incident. Each error is a link in that chain and if you remove one of those links

you break the chain and most likely avoid the negative outcome. Here are a few ways to break that chain:

- ▶ Check the weather and time of sunset before you go. Avoid hiking when the weather, even the weather predicted for that night after you should be out of the woods, is beyond your skill level, experience, and/or gear.
- ▶ Always have a plan. It only takes a few minutes to look at a map and decide where you will start and the route you will take. Once you know the route and terrain you should estimate how long it will take you to complete. Unless it is a planned night hike, make sure you will be out of the woods well before dark.
- ▶ Leave your plan with someone and give them the time to sound the alarm. If you end up stranded in the woods you need someone who will automatically send resources to help you before it is too late.
- ▶ Stick to the plan. If you must alter your plan, leave a note from where you deviate so searchers will know your new direction of travel.
- ▶ Always carry a portable battery charger. No, you shouldn't completely rely on your smartphone, but that doesn't mean it isn't extremely helpful in an emergency.

▶ Know how to display your current coordinates in Google Maps. Help us help you.

▶ Always carry a paper map and compass. Take a local navigation course if you don't yet know how to use them.

▶ At the very least, always carry a compass and know your safety azimuth. A safety azimuth is a direction you can walk from anywhere in the park in which you will always intersect with a road or other feature within a reasonable amount of time to get you back or to help.

▶ Always carry a headlamp and extra batteries.

▶ Always carry extra clothes to stay warm and dry in the temperature and weather predicted for that night.

▶ Always carry an emergency bivy (under 4 ounces) to make it through a cold wet night.

▶ Always carry a loud whistle to periodically call for help and save your voice.

▶ Always carry the above and the other 10 Essentials.

Of course, there is always a remote chance, even with great preparation, that you may get injured or lost on a hike. In the next issue of Trail Walker, we will discuss what to do if, despite thorough trip planning and preparation, you do find yourself in trouble and need help. [Scott Fitterman, NJSAR](#)



## New Stone Steps Help Long Path

The Long Distance Trails Crew rebuilt a section of the Long Path at the north end of Hook Mountain State Park, near the Knickerbocker Fire House, with stone steps. The existing trail involved a steep

ascent that had succumbed to erosion and heavy hiker traffic. The LDTC rebuilt the trail incorporating several stone step sections, improved water management, and a more accessible gradient for visitors to reach the epic views of the Hudson from the top. This project was completed in the late spring/early summer 2022.



# Congrats to these Lenape Trail end-to-enders



**CORY TIGER**  
NEW JERSEY PROGRAM  
COORDINATOR

An end to ender is someone who has hiked every mile of a long-distance trail, all at once as a thru-hike or in sections over weeks, months or years. We typically congratulate those completing the AT or the Long Path but, in this Trail Walker, we'd like to offer praise the first hikers to share their Lenape Trail end-to-end story with us, Scott and Kristin Hirsch.

Scott and Kristin reached out to NYNJTC back in June after completing their 15-month effort to hike the entirety of the 36-mile Lenape Trail.



In an email they shared their experience, "It's not exactly the Appalachian Trail, but it's noteworthy to us. We started going on local nature hikes in the NJ reservations during Covid and at some point, became aware that the Lenape Trail seemed to snake through almost all the reservations in Essex County. So, last April

(2021), we decided to hike the entire trail, end-to-end starting at the southern end of Branch Brook Park."

Over the course of a year, Scott and Kristin hiked the trail section-by-section, covering several miles at a time throughout the spring and fall months.

Established in 1895, the Essex County Park System is

the oldest county park system in America, comprising over 6,000 acres of open space, including large undeveloped reservations and busy neighborhood parks. The Lenape Trail was designed to showcase all the rich cultural and natural history offered in the 18 parks and 11 municipalities it connects. Therefore, we were thrilled to hear Scott and Kristin mention the importance of a trail that connects Essex County's significant landmarks, "Although we've lived in Glen Ridge, NJ for over 20 years, until this little project, we never really appreciated all the parks and reservations our county had to offer. We

discovered so many neighborhoods, parks, and natural habitats right in our backyard that we otherwise never would have been aware of."

Scott and Kristin also expressed their appreciation for all the work and effort our volunteers put into maintaining the Lenape Trail saying, "We really appreciated the well-maintained blazes, trails and signage, so much in fact, we added the NJ/NY Trail Conference to our annual charitable cause list."

Join us in thanking Scott and Kristin for sharing their Lenape Trail experience. We love hearing from you, so please share your stories with us!



## Lenape Trail Gets New Bollards

In June, the Trail Conference celebrated the installation of new Lenape Trail bollards in Cedar Grove Park. In partnership with the Essex County Park System and Essex County leaders, 33 new bollards were installed along New Jersey's 36-mile Lenape Trail.

This project represents the culmination of 10+ years of work by the Trail Conference to establish wayfinding bollards along the trail, connecting people in this densely populated area with nature. Thanks to the dedication of our local volunteer committee, led by Supervisor David DeShazer, locations in need of navigational posts were identified, prioritized, and communicated to Essex County Parks.

David DeShazer shared his excitement for the progress of the bollard project:

"The Lenape Trail bollard project holds a special place for me, as information sessions about their installation in my local park was how I first connected with the NYNJ Trail Conference, met some of the dedicated volunteers and leaders. With the adoption of the Lenape Trail, the Trail Conference had its first urban/suburban trail passing through neigh-

borhoods, parks and nature conservations as it wound through Essex County, NJ. NYNJTC leaders Steve Marano, Deb Kagan, Peter Dolan and others realized that many Essex County residents and visitors may not be familiar with this trail and how to read blazes. The bollards were an ideal way to mark the trail, promote it to communities, and educate all on the trail and how to follow the blazes along its entire 36 mile length. Installing the bollards themselves is an ongoing partnership between the Essex County Parks Department, local town and park leaders, and NYNJTC leaders and volunteers.

With the increase of trail use during the Covid-19 pandemic, some of the gaps in bollard installations became apparent, thanks to great feedback from those enjoying the trail. Identifying and reviewing locations for these bollards, we found that many of our 'new' spots for installation were within feet (or less!) of locations Deb and her team flagged years earlier. The bollard installations in Cedar Grove are a giant step in this journey, connecting

some of the newest sections of the trail, Hilltop Reservation and Cedar Grove Park, with longtime favorites of the West Essex Trail. And as before, involved Trail Conference Volunteers, Essex County government and the Essex County Parks Department."

In 2017/18, an award from Partners for Health supported efforts for increased trail planning, public workshops, and volunteer support for the trail—resulting in the first formal Trail Conference maps of the Lenape Trail and interactive digital guide. Organized by former Lenape Trail Field Manager, Debra Kagan, The Official Guide to the Lenape Trail acts as a key to exploring the Lenape Trail and the parks through which it traverses. The Guide includes detailed maps and expert input from local museums, historical societies, and nature centers to enrich the trail experience of county residents and attract new hikers, walkers, and volunteers.

The installations of the new bollards are the result of the ongoing dedication of Trail Conference volunteers, staff, and park partners to care for and improve the Lenape Trail.

## NYNJTC Partners with Wilderness Inquiry in the City of Newark

Last October (2021) and this May, NYNJTC joined Wilderness Inquiry during their "floating classroom" initiative, Canoemobile, on the Newark Riverfront to promote outdoor recreation opportunities to Newark residents.

Canoemobile is an effort to connect communities to their local waterways through environmental education and water-based recreation. Wilderness Inquiry outdoor educators travel across the country with a trailer full of 10-person canoes, offering on-water experiences to industrialized and urbanized communities where water-based recreation opportunities are limited. In October and May, Canoemobile traveled from Minnesota to New Jersey to offer free and open to the public paddles to students, families, and anyone interested in getting out on the Passaic River.

Given our shared mission of connecting people with nature and the event's proximity to Lenape Trail's eastern starting point and Newark's largest park, Branch



Brook Park, we wanted to join the fun. NYNJTC staff tabled at Newark Riverfront Canoemobile events on October 14th, 15th, and 16th 2021 and again on May 31st to disperse Lenape Trail brochures and maps to Newark residents and discuss the hiking opportunities available right in their own backyards. Wilderness Inquiry in partnership with City of Newark Office of Sustainability, Newark Green Team, and The Lower Passaic Urban Waters Partnership delivered a successful event where many participants enjoyed their first time out on the water. It was wonderful to partake in such an incredible initiative and talk/paddle with the Newark community on their local waterway.

We look forward to Canoemobile's next tour to the East Coast!

Stay tuned for their next trip and learn more about Canoemobile and other outdoor education initiatives provided by Wilderness Inquiry at [wildernessinquiry.org](http://wildernessinquiry.org).

## The Woman with the Mountain Beagles

Have you ever met a local of the land? Not necessarily someone born and raised in the Catskills, but someone who visited as a child and fell in love with the landscape.

Someone who continued to camp at the North-South Lake campground for decades, taking their own children every summer for twenty years. Someone who spends two weeks at the campground every warm month of the year. Some-

one who knows every trail, memorable rock & cliff as if the veins in their arm.

Someone whose dogs owned the scrambles. She is perhaps one of the original trail stewards of North Point; it still amuses me how she helped me steward, answer the questions I couldn't answer, and give directions to lost hikers.

Just like the plane crash from the 1980s by Stoppel Point is a part of the land's history, this woman and her story are, too — another reason to protect the land we love. Amanda Clark

# Long Path Protection Plan Highlights Remaining Protected Corridor Gaps



**JEREMY APGAR**  
CARTOGRAPHER

The New York-New Jersey Trail Conference is excited to announce the completion of the Long Path Protection Plan (LPPP), a comprehensive portfolio of maps and project descriptions through 10 counties in New York. The LPPP covers all of the unprotected gaps that need to be protected to permanently protect the Long Path trail corridor of more than 425 miles in length, and it should help advance shared missions and open space goals with partners and ultimately help expedite the goal of creating a protected Long Path corridor from New York City to the Adirondacks.

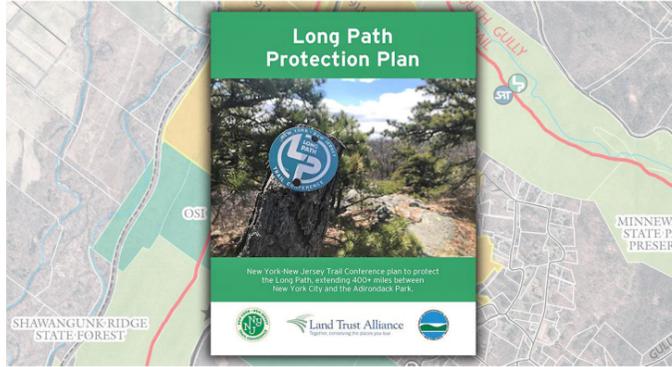
## The Long Path

The Long Path is a trail that extends nearly 360 miles from near the 175th Street Subway Station in New York City to John Boyd Thacher State Park near Albany, New York, the current official terminus. The trail continues northward with blazed roadwalks and some off-road sections to the Mohawk River, and then a mostly unblazed roadwalk to reach Northville in the Adirondack Park. The aqua-blazed Long Path traverses many scenic and historic regions of varied geologic setting on the west side of the Hudson River, including the Palisades, Harriman State Park, the Shawangunk Ridge, the Catskills, and the Helderberg Escarpment.

The Trail Conference has been championing the Long Path for decades and has had many success stories with corridor protection for this trail and the associated Shawangunk Ridge Trail, including acquiring more than 400 acres of land for the Long Path corridor over the past 4 years, and finally having a comprehensive protection plan will bring many benefits. Thanks to a NYS Conservation Partnership Program Conservation Catalyst Grant and support from the Land Trust Alliance, the Trail Conference and its partners now have a vision and plan for trail corridor protection along the entire trail. We look forward to using the plan to collaborate with partners throughout the state to elevate protection of the Long Path and the lands through which it passes, helping to ensure the expertise and passion of our dedicated volunteers and staff will have long-lasting effects for land conservation in New York.

## Long Path Protection Plan

The LPPP is a 179-page comprehensive portfolio of maps and project area descriptions. The plan is organized in three distinct sections and by county, starting at Rockland County and proceeding northward to Saratoga and Fulton counties, with individual project areas within each county that are largely focused on unprotected property between already-protected lands. Each county section also includes an overview and history of the Long Path



through that county. Links to download the complete LPPP or individual sections and counties can be found below.

A total of 54 project areas, covering 376 priority parcels, are included in the plan. Each project area includes a detailed map that highlights already-protected parklands and corridor priority parcels, along with the current route of the Long Path, other trails, and potential proposed routes where desired. To provide additional context, parking access, scenic viewpoints, other points of interest, road names, town names, park names, and waterbody names are included.

A narrative description accompanies each project area map to provide analysis of parcels for which some form of protection should be secured, ranging from direct acquisition to other easements or agreements that could provide protection for the corridor and the trail. These descriptions also detail the actions needed so that the Trail Conference and our partners can strategically prioritize protection efforts.

While this plan is focused primarily on corridor protection for trail purposes, it has the added benefit of providing a plan for wildlife habitat corridor protection and overall protection of flora and fauna in sometimes unique environments.

## Next Steps

With the completion of this Long Path Protection Plan, the Trail Conference is aiming to obtain more support from park partners, landowners, land trusts, and county and municipal officials to further shared goals of open space and recreation. In addition, our internal Long Path Committee is already using the plan to identify crucial project areas, and our energized volunteers and dedicated staff expect to use this vision document to make headway with corridor protection in many areas.

We have seen public support for trails grow over the last two years, and this is reflected in the outstanding numbers of Long Path thru-hiking completions and a growing,

vibrant community of hikers, runners, volunteers and landowners who are supportive of the Long Path. This Long Path Protection Plan, and the momentum of protection and trail improvements it will drive, will hopefully elevate the Long Path as a premier long-distance trail that uniquely connects New York City to the Adirondacks.

Download PDFs of the complete LPPP, or individual sections and counties, at [bit.ly/tc-LPPP](https://bit.ly/tc-LPPP).

## Special Thanks

This Long Path Protection Plan came together thanks to several dedicated individuals, most notably Andy Garrison and Nick Boyle. Our land protection efforts and the development of this plan also would not have been possible without generous funding support:

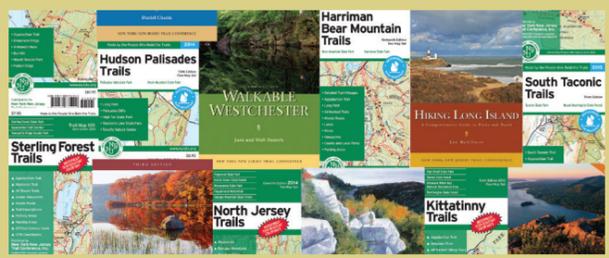
- The Long Path Protection Plan was supported with funding from the New York State Conservation Partnership Program (NYSCPP) and New York's Environmental Protection Fund. The NYSCPP is administered by the Land Trust Alliance, in coordination with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

- Additional funding for this plan came from the Trail Conference's donor-supported Land Acquisition and Stewardship Fund (LASF).

We hope this Long Path Protection Plan will inspire more people to join the cause to protect the important lands throughout our region!

## HIKERS' MARKETPLACE

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## Celebrate our Publications Committee Volunteers!

Our Publications Committee has more than 170 years of combined experience producing our maps and books and currently includes more than a dozen volunteers, including six core volunteers who have individually been on the committee for between 19 to 42 years. Our staff cartographer, now in his 16th year at the Trail Conference, is also on the committee, and all the committee members work tirelessly to bring you the authoritative, high-quality maps and guidebooks that we are known for. A few significant roles are: author, editor, indexer, cartographer, photographer, GPS data collector, map/book project manager, field-checker, archivist, copyright registration manager, and marketer.

Please join us in thanking Daniel Chazin, Walt Daniels, Herb Chong, Jane Daniels,



John Jurasek, and Suse Bell for their outstanding long-time volunteer contributions toward our publications! Thanks also to other volunteers who have contributed their time with recent and ongoing projects, including John Mack (another long-time committee member with more than 17 years of map experience), George Dagus, Craig Little, and Jim Simpson, as well as newer members and contributors Barbara Evans, Fred Stern, Juan Melli, Thea Landesberg, and Elizabeth Lash.

The Publications Committee has continued to meet monthly via Zoom over the past 2.5 years, and 2021 was one of our most successful years with the release of three record-breaking, significantly updated publications: *Walkable Westchester*,

*Delaware Water Gap & Kittatinny Trails*, and *Northern New Jersey Highlands Trails*, as well as our 100th Anniversary retrospective, *Reflections*. Our authoritative content continues to be in high demand by trail users and park partners throughout the region, and the Publications Committee is focused on doing its best to meet these demands. We can always use help to reach our goals; visit [nynjtc.org/volunteer](https://nynjtc.org/volunteer) and click on Volunteer Openings to discover openings with our Publications team.

Learn more about our most recent maps and books, as well as the latest updates on upcoming maps including Morris County Highlands Trails maps, Catskill Trails maps, and East Hudson Trails maps, by visiting [bit.ly/tc-mapsbooks](https://bit.ly/tc-mapsbooks).