Welcome to Our New 2022 Volunteer Leaders!

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 surveyor, 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

Nolan, Ed Walsh, Phyllis Lannello, 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.

KATIE KOURAKOS
VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT MANAGER

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, Wiener Mueller, Thea Landesburg, Peter Stoj, Nancy Rachana, Irene Shoham, Nicole Wright, Lily Melhi, Rudy Kircher, Delia Kulukundis

GOING THE EXTRA MILE AWARD: Eric Friedman, John Fudala, Michael Fashley, Willard Dye, Dave Haas, Dan Hoberman

DEDICATED SERVICE AWARD: Ed Benvena, Cathie Swyka, Steve Goldberg, George Prokopak, Paul Bisset, Mary Ayers, James Nolan, Ed Walsh, Phyllis Lannello, Joanne Beliveau, Brian Collins, Tom Conway

Welcome to Our New 2022 Volunteer Leaders!
We are excited that the Athletic Brewing Company dedi-
cated to making craft brews, received 190 applications from across the globe with requests totaling $6.2 million in 2022.

Two classroom workshops this winter will teach attendees
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 listing and sign up at nynjtc.org/events or email 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 NYNITC presented Ike and his wife, Marilyn, with the William Hoeferlin Award in recognition of their outstanding contributions to the management and care of regional hiking trails. Ike was one of the first recipients of the ADK North—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 Chair, while leading innumerable hikes through those years. On his 96th 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 swimmer’s honor, 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 very wit, kindness and enthusiasm.

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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 our trails are safe and accessible for all to enjoy for generations to come.

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We are thankful for this sup-
port! See the Trail Conference and the exciting work Athletic Brewing generously aids here: athleticbrewing.com/pages/two-for-the-trails

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.

Thanks to All Who Attended and Contributed to Our Annual Gala
We had a wonderful event on October 13th in the beautiful Riv 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 make 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 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. Devi 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
Kristy Sabin Stewardship Communications Coordinator
Visit nynjtc.org/about-us to learn more.
AISF Crew Works to Protect the Endangered Northern Cricket Frog

KRISTI SABINS
TECHNICAL COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

Recently, endangered species conservation and invasive species management converged for our Aquatics Invasive Species 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 this frog, 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 efforts.

After completing a visual survey of the lake, determining the density (and natively!) vegetated south end was premium 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, the AISF crew can now work on a management plan that ensures this tiny amphibian has continued success at this site.

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 piece of the Pochuck Boardwalk in Vernon, N.J. after decades of volunteer service.

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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, you have our constant presence and tireless work at the Pochuck Boardwalk will be sorely missed.

Happy Trails to Frank after two-plus decades of service
New Initiative Brings Volunteers and Corps Members Together

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 volunteer leaders work directly with our Volunteer Leaders who volunteer their time in a specific area across the region that the Trail Conference covers. Our Leaders are empowered to lead and organize projects, work directly with our partners, think of 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 Leaders available 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.

NY, NJ Volunteer Trail Leaders Needed

**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 the maintenance on nearly 14 miles of trails over this forested terrain with a team of devoted trail maintainers and NYS Department of Environmental Conservation staff.

**Schunemunk Trail Supervisor**

Schunemunk State Park features unique geological rock formations, views of the Hudson Valley and Catskill mountains, rolling meadows, and cascading waterfalls. The individudal who takes on the Trail Supervisor position for this area has the opportunity to oversee the maintenance of the forested 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 this opportunity to volunteer in this unique area!

**West Hudson North Trail Chair**

The West Hudson North region covers trails in Minnewaska State Park, Schunemunk State Park, and Black Rock Forest in the lower Hudson Valley. The region covers terrain varying 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 maintain trails and 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 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 is the most diverse area. When you venture to the Neversink River Unique Area, which is home to spectacular gorges, several waterfalls, and the world-famous Minnewaska water bars and diversion tunnels, you get to enjoy a unique experience learning to work with a great group of volunteers, Trail Conference staff, park managers, and to experience the varying terrain that western New York has to offer!
Celebrating the Work of Invasives Strike Force Volunteer Crew Leader Rich Rockwell

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 invasive 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 ISF-Lead Volunteer training. Thanks to our volunteer-led ISF Crew program, 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 Watessing Park in Essex County on an experimental, more targeted approach to sustainability and responsibility treat Japanese knotweed, a notoriously difficult invasive plant to manage due to its ability to spread through fragmentation and via rhizomes. Most recently, he has engaged with partners at Rutgers University and the Allinson 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 has nearly cleared out knotweed and knocked back honeysuckle. In these invasive plants’ stead, there is now native white snake root, mountain spikenard, wood asters and goldenrods 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 sustainable 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.

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

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-supporter Georg Budenbender and Dr. 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.

In the Delaware Water Gap, she 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 Mountain 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!
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 welcome 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 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 connect to the blue, white, and yellow trail. The closest trail maintenance crew rebuilt a section of the existing trail involved a steep ascent that had succumbed to erosion and heavy hiker traffic. The LDTC rebuilt the trail as you push your pace along 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 charged 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.
➤ 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
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 commit- tee, led by Supervisor David DeSuzer, locations in need of navigational posts were identified, prioritized, and communicated to Essex County Parks.

David DeSuzer shared his excitement for the progress of the bollard project: “The Lenape Trail bollard project holds a special place for those who have participated in the many sessions about their installation in my local park was how I first connected with the NYNJTC Trail Conference, met some of the dedicated vol- unteers, and had the idea planted in my mind. With the adoption of the Lenape Trail, the Trail Conference had its first urban/suburban trail passing through neigh-

births, 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 res- idents 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 edu- cate all on the trail and how to follow the blazes along its entire 36-mile length. In addition, the bollards themselves are an outstanding partnership between the Essex County Parks Depart- ment, 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 bollards that were already 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 Reserva- tion 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 Park 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 inter- active digital guide. Organized by former Lenape Trail Field Manager, Deb 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.
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 thorough New York and New Jersey. 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 roadway and some off-road sections to the Mohawk River, and then a mostly unbladed roadway to reach Northern New Jersey and 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, the Catskill Mountains, 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 40 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 gaps between 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 management, and a map 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 our trail, 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 are using this vision document to make headway with corridor protection in many areas. We have seen public support for trails grow over the last few 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.

Special Thanks

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

Our donor-supported corridor protection and overall Open Space Goal of the Long Path Protection Plan will inspire more people to join the cause to protect the important lands throughout our region! A new Long Path Protection Plan will inspire more people to join the cause to protect the important lands throughout our region!