The Appalachian Trail: Built by Volunteers, Then and Now

On Oct. 7, 1923, Trail Conference volunteers officially opened the first section of the Appalachian Trail, which they built and blazed through Bear Mountain and Harriman state parks in New York. This fall, the Trail Conference will finish construction on the historic Bear Mountain Trails Project—the most ambitious rehabilitation of the A.T. ever conducted—which has been primarily built by volunteers, just as it originally was 95 years ago.

That's nearly a century of Trail Conference volunteers selflessly giving their time and energy to ensure that the Appalachian Trail—not just at Bear Mountain, but along its entire route through New Jersey and New York—remains open, safe, and enjoyable for all who travel it. As more people head outdoors, the need to protect trails like the A.T. and the wild places they traverse becomes more crucial than ever before.

Over 2 million people visit Bear Mountain each year, making this original section of the A.T. the most heavily used along the entire Trail. When issues of heavy use and degradation came to a head in 2004, a plan was needed to accommodate the high volume of visitors, the sustainable solution was to build stone steps as wide as 40 feet in some places (right). To accommodate the high volume of visitors, the sustainable solution was to build stone steps up the majority of the mountain (above).

Before the start of the Bear Mountain Trails Project, the Appalachian Trail on Bear Mountain was as wide as 40 feet in some places (right). To accommodate the high volume of visitors, the sustainable solution was to build stone steps up the majority of the mountain (above).

Over 2 million people visit Bear Mountain each year, making this original section of the A.T. the most heavily used along the entire Trail. When issues of heavy use and degradation came to a head in 2004, a plan was needed to accommodate the high volume of hikers and protect the Appalachian Trail. To accommodate the high volume of visitors, the sustainable solution was to build stone steps up the majority of the mountain (above).

Invasive species, rare and endangered plants, protected lands, sawyers who cut down invasive trees, coreremoval monitors, trail spotters for native species, coreremoval monitors, trail spotters for invasive species, and the entire Trail Conference team all work together to protect the Appalachian Trail. To accommodate the high volume of visitors, the sustainable solution was to build stone steps up the majority of the mountain (above).

The Trail Conference has labored to ensure that the Appalachian Trail—the most heavily used section of the entire route through New Jersey and New York—is open, safe, and enjoyable for all who travel it. As more people head outdoors, the need to protect trails like the Appalachian Trail becomes more crucial than ever before.

A grand opening celebration for the completed Appalachian Trail rehabilitation on Bear Mountain will be held in the spring. Sign up for our digital newsletter and follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter for updates.
New 7-Mile, Multi-Use Trail Loop Opens in Sterling Forest

By ERIK MICKELSON and SONA MASON

Seventeen years after the first Trails Plan for Sterling For- est State Park was drafted, the park is about to celebrate the opening of one of the finest multi-use trails in the region, built by the Trail Conference. The completion of a 7-mile trail loop open to hikers, mountain bikers, and, in part, equestrians brings to fruition the dreams of so many who worked to make this beautiful forest accessible to a wide variety of users.

Trail maintenance and construction for hikers began shortly after the interim Sterling Trails Forest Plan was written in 2001. In 2009, a fi- nal Trails Plan was released with the vision and goal to de- velop, maintain, and operate a high-quality trail system that links to regional trail systems and is maintained through public/private partnerships to provide a year-round trail system for a diversity of users. With funding from New York State Parks, the Trail Conference began work on the new multi-use trail loop in Oc-tober 2015.

Since then, a small army of Trail Conference volunteer and Conservation Corps members has given more than 13,000 hours building the Munsee-Eagle/Hutchinson/Red Back trail loop. The project achieved its first big milestone in 2016, when sections of the Red Back Trail were rerouted and the newly constructed, 2-mile Hutchinson Trail was opened. Over the last two sea- sons, Trail Conference crews have been building the 3.5-mile Munsee-Eagle Trail. Named after a vanishing Iroquois lan- guage and Eagle Mountain, which the trails skirt, trav- ealing the Munsee-Eagle can elicit a sense of soaring as it flows along cliffs and through valleys. “I hope the trail feels nat- ively underfoot as it unfurls before you and your mind soars away from troubles to focus on the moment and the language of the trail, howev- er it speaks to you,” says Trail Conference Field Manager Erik Mickelson, who designed and built the trail.

On Sunday, Sept. 30, both the completion of the Munsee- Eagle and the 7-mile loop it creates will be celebrated with a grand opening (see side- bar). The trails wind playfully through a multitude of habi- tats, creating a fun, engaging experience that showcases the splendor of Sterling Forest.

Look Back: Breaking Ground

On Oct. 24, 2015, Trail Conference Field Manager Erik Mickelson was joined by several key figures in the local mountain-biking community to work on the first realignments of the Red Back Trail. Breaking ground that day were Arthur and Ellen White, who have been pivotal in building and maintaining trails in Ringwood State Park, and Tom Hennegan, the current president of JORBA, who has been a fixture at Jungle Habitat. Michael Vitti, from CLIMB and the New York State Trails Council, has also been an integral part of the project, helping Art and others forge the Trails Plan itself, walking some of the layout with Erik, and attending many work days. Thanks to all partners and volunteers who made this trail loop possible!

Sharing the Trail

Because the new trails in Sterling Forest are mostly single-track, shared-use trail, please practice proper trail etiquette. Pause and acknowledge each other’s presence. All users yield to horses, and bikes yield to horses and hikers. If possible, move down low off the trail below horses rather than climbing above them.

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You’re Invited to the Grand Opening!

The Trail Conference and New York State Parks will hold a grand opening of the new 7-mile, single-track, multi-use trail loop at Sterling Forest State Park on Sunday, Sept. 30, at 11:30 a.m. at the Caretaker Parking Lot on Long Meadow Road in Tuxedo Park, N.Y. The ribbon- cutting will be followed by a guided ride, run, and hike beginning on the Munsee Eagle and returning on the Hutchinson Trail. All are welcome to help celebrate this achievement. Sign up at bit.ly/stfsmut.
This Dog Will Change the Way We Fight Invasives

LINDA ROHLEDER DIRECTOR OF PLANT STewardSHIP

The Trail Conference is the leader in regional efforts to combat invasive species. As such, we are always looking for the most effective ways to diminish the impact invasives are having on the environment. That’s why the Trail Conference is launching a Conservation Detection Dog program—the first of its kind in the Northeast. With the help of Paul and Joan Zofnas, an anonymous major donor, and other supporters, we have just raised the minimum funding needed to move forward with a pilot program.

Dia, our year-old Labra- dor retriever, will start her invasives-specific training by learning to detect the presence of Scotch broom (Cytisus scoparius). This species is tar- geted for eradication by the Lower Hudson Partnership for Invasive Species Management (PRISM), which the Trail Conference manages. Scotch broom typically grows among other plants in fields and along roadways in our parks, with- out the help of a detection dog, it can be difficult to spot, mak- ing Dais nose an important asset to efforts to control the species.

Our canine handler Joshua Borse will be training and working with Dia. Josh is an emergency search and rescue dog handler for New Jersey Task Force 1 and FEMA and owner of Painted Dog training in New York City. During their searches together, Dia will wear a GPS collar to record the locations of her surveys. Once Dia detects the presence of a target species, our Invasives Strike Force team will be called in to manage it. Over time, we hope to train Dia to detect multiple species, such as southern pine beetle, an invasive insect that is devastating pine forests, or spotted lanternfly, a threat to grape, apple, and hops crops.

We thank the Zofnass family and all donors to our Detection Dog program for their generous support to make our pilot program possible. Show your support of the Conservation Detection Dog Program and help protect native ecosystems today at bit.ly/adf18.

Why Use Dogs for Invasives Detection?

Utilizing their exceptional sense of smell, dogs have been traditionally used for search and rescue, as well as weapons and narcotics de- tection. These tracking and detection skills are now be- ing used to protect our wild spaces. In 2010, the journal Invasive Plant Science and Management published a comprehensive study that concluded trained dogs could smell and detect twice the number of invasive plants that humans could observe with their eyes.

In a metropolitan region highly prone to invasive infestations, detection is a key component of successful invasive species management. The addition of a conservation detection dog to the Trail Conference’s Invasives Strike Force helps us to increase both the quality and quantity of our invasive surveys.

The Trail Conference is resilient—able to resist disturbance and enable recovery of both our parks and the invaluable natural resources that belong to us all. In essence, our ethos remains the same: Protect the land you love. How does an environmental nonprofit maintain that kind of dependency today? The Trail Con- ference is resilient—able to resist disturbance and enable recovery of both our parks and the invaluable natural resources that belong to us all. In essence, our ethos remains the same: Protect the land you love.
People Needed to Protect a Green Corridor for Long Path, Highlands Trail

Intense development in Orange County, N.Y., threatens detrimental effects on the Long Path and Highlands Trail. In a rapidly growing area where the amount of undeveloped land is dwindling, we cannot let these trails be the victims of urbanization.

The 358-mile Long Path connects New York City at the 175th Street subway station with John Boyd Thacher State Park in Albany County. The 183-mile Highlands Trail connects the Delaware River in New Jersey to the Hudson River at Storm King Mountain. Where these trails co-align on Seven Springs Road in the Town of Monroe, the Trail Conference is deeply concerned about various proposals to expand development.

The proposed comprehensive plan for the Town of Palm Tree, which includes the Village of Kirsy’s Joel, will lead to intense development along the route of the Long Path and Highlands Trail. Currently, vacant parcels along Seven Springs Road provide a woodland character for these trails, which will be irreversibly altered as development commences. Additionally, a new proposal to create the Village of Beër Sheva takes in all remaining Town of Monroe areas west and south of Palm Tree/Kirsy’s Joel that are outside the villages of Montrose and Harriman—completely transforming the trail experience in this area.

When the potential for Palm Tree build-up along the Long Path and Highlands Trail first arose in 2017, Trail Conference members rallied by sending emails, making phone calls, and appearing at meetings to ensure Orange County legislators were aware of the significant threat that major residential development poses to local trails and parks. In the last year, Trail Conference staff and volunteers met with state, county, and municipal officials to come up with viable options for protecting these long-distance trails.

To protect the Long Path and Highlands Trail, the Trail Conference calls for the creation of a green corridor between Gonzalez Park and the Heritage Trail. The undeveloped parcels of land between Gonzalez Park and the Heritage Trail in Monroe are the last refuge of the multi-state trails. This critical pinch point forms a vital greenway connecting two state parks: Schunnemunk Mountain and Goosepond Mountain. If the land around Seven Springs Road is developed, the experience on these trails will be severely impacted and the parks will be isolated.

We are not alone in this call for action. The Long Path and Highlands Trail are listed on the New York State Open Space Plan as part of the unique physiographic Highlands region, a “nationally significant landscape” that “provides and protects water for millions of New York and New Jersey residents.” It is named “an Important Bird Area” and a “high priority for conservation efforts.”

While the Open Space Plan acknowledges the necessity of land conservation in this area, it is not enough to ensure the protection of the Long Path and Highlands Trail. A consistent presence and stronger voice need to be seen and heard by decision-makers. Help the Trail Conference ensure this long-distance trail corridor remains part of the conversation as the comprehensive plan for the new Town of Palm Tree moves forward and the proposal to create the Village of Beër Sheva has the potential to proceed.

We are looking for concerned outdoor-lovers who would like to be part of the solution—people who will write to and speak with elected officials, attend and occasionally speak at public hearings and town meetings, and meet with key decision-makers. Email volunteers@nynjtc.org to get involved. Sign up for our digital newsletter at nynjtc.org and follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to stay up-to-date on this issue.

The most powerful tool in the Trail Conference arsenal is our united voice. Together, we can make a difference.

New Thru-Run Record Set on New York’s Long Path

Will Fortin and Dustin Smith completed a thru-hike of the 358-mile Long Path in just eight days this June, setting a new record for the trail’s fastest known time (FKT). Will and Dustin set out on their unsupported trek of the Long Path at the official northern terminus of the trail in John Boyd Thacher State Park on June 1. On June 9, Will and Dustin crossed the George Washington Bridge into Manhattan, becoming the new record-holders. There, they were met by Trail Conference Board member and volunteer Ken Posner, who had set the previous FKT in 2013 after completing the Long Path in nine days. “Completing the Long Path end-to-end was the challenge of a lifetime,” Dustin says. “It was the hardest thing I’ve ever done, but it was a chance to encounter truly wild and spectacular parts of New York.”

The pair said they are grateful for the Friends of the Long Path community for their warm and welcoming support on their adventure. They thank the volunteers who have worked so hard to make the Long Path “New York’s greatest trail.” Check out bit.ly/tc-lpfkt for a full recap of their record-breaking journey.
The Long Path is New York’s premier long-distance hiking trail, spanning 358 miles from 175th Street in Manhattan to John Boyd Thacher State Park, north of Albany. A hiking trail running from one of the largest cities in the world through dense urban areas and suburban areas faces numerous challenges. Unlike trails in parks that are protected, the Long Path runs through state, county, and town parks—and through a lot of private lands. While more and more of the trail get protection through land acquisition agreements, more and more construction and suburban sprawl threaten the existence of the trail. The Trail Conference, with local municipality partners, is constantly fighting to preserve and protect the trail.

One example of this battle recently occurred in Nyack, recently occurred in Nyack, with local and suburban sprawl threaten the existence of the trail. The Trail Conference, with local municipality partners, is constantly fighting to preserve and protect the trail.

One example of this battle recently occurred in Nyack, where the trail runs between two apartment complexes through a narrow strip of land protected by Rockland County. The Trail Conference was notified of the planned construction of a club setting adjacent to the complex that might impact the trail. We asked the county for further information, but they had no record of a construction permit. We went to look for myself and discovered a new club, which had been illegally dumped over a portion of a county trail and onto the Long Path. We notified the county, and Park Operations Manager Michael DiMola inspected and confirmed that a contractor had improperly filled the area. We met with the manager of the complex, who said the work had been done without their knowledge and that the debris would be removed. Mike DiMola made sure the trails and surrounding area were restored. Meanwhile, the county received the permit request for the clubhouse construction to sit adjacent to the complex’s pool, about 200 feet from the area that had been improperly filled. The clubhouse was planned to be a 2-story structure immediately adjacent to the trail. While the construction on private property could not be stopped, the Trail Conference was given the opportunity to comment on the plans. We asked that native, deer-resistant landscaping be planted to provide a visual buffer.

To accommodate construction, the Long Path needed to be moved, and Rockland County offered to relocate the trail. Mike, with assistance from the Rockland County Conservation and Service Corps, cleared the area. We notified some weed whackers, chainsaws, rakes, and shovels. They even had to help cut new wood chips. The new route was not only necessary for the preservation of this Long Path section, it’s also an improvement over the former trail, with rock slabs to maintain, protect, and yes, improve the trail. If you are interested in helping on the Long Path, contact volunteer@nynjtc.org to find out how to get involved.
The Trail Conference mobilizes more than 2,100 volunteers who are dedicated to maintaining and preserving the integrity of trails and the lands they traverse. One way we work to create great trail experiences is through the service of our crews. Our volunteers and Conservation Corps members have been building and maintaining trails and protecting ecosystems in your favorite parks all season long. Check out their great work! If it inspires you to take action, learn how to get involved in building adventures and protecting the land you love at nynjtc.org/events.

**ECOLOGICAL STEWARDSHIP**

Invasives Strike Force Crew
The 2018 Invasives Strike Force (ISF) Crew, comprised of volunteers and four Conservation Corps members, has been focusing on eliminating emerging invasive plant species under the direction of the Lower Hudson Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM). This season, the ISF Crew improved nearly 84 acres of natural areas by removing an estimated 1.5 million invasive plants and searched an additional 200 acres. Through more than 24 projects, they dealt with serious invaders such as giant hogweed and kudzu, worked on interesting restoration projects protecting crucial New England cottontail breeding ground and rare turtle habitat, and continued efforts to push back the northernmost edge of Japanese angelica tree infestation.

**PEOPLE FOR TRAILS**

**PROTECT THE LAND YOU LOVE**

**NEW JERSEY**

MEVO Trail Crew
In partnership with the Trail Conference, the MEVO (Malwah Environmental Volunteers Organization) Trail Crew has become a group of hardworking stewards for trails and the environment at large. Two days a week, our 2018 crew of eight college students hit the trail in late May and worked on bench-cutting trails, setting stepping stones, remediation of abandoned trail, and more through August. Every Thursday we joined the Ramapo Crew in Ramapo Valley County Reservation working on the technical stone-step reroute beside the Vista Loop’s waterfall. The personal mission of this crew? Do great trail work… and pet a lot of dogs. On our crew trip report each day we made sure to mark both linear feet of trail built and the number of dogs we pet! Geoff Hamilton, Corps Manager

Lenape Trail Crew
The Lenape Trail connects dozens of landmarks in Essex County and is many people’s first experience with hiking. This crew’s work focuses primarily on making the trail more visible and accessible for new users. The crew and several volunteer teams rerouted the Lenape Trail through Hildtop Reservation in Vernon and Cedar Grove this spring. In Hilltop and several other sections, bollards were installed to provide information on the trail. These installations were possible only with the work of Essex County and township staff. Other achievements include the revitalization of the Lenape Trail through the popular Mills Reservation and bridge rebuilding in the Newark Reservoir, which survived recent flood damage.

Habitat Helpers Crew
Habitat Helpers volunteers have been keeping the native habitat garden at Trail Conference Headquarters intact. They meet every other Sunday through October. The gardens have thrived this year. Even in the midst of drought conditions earlier in the season, the flowers were blooming and buzzing with pollinators. Many visitors have commented on how beautiful the landscaping is, thanks to the 64 volunteers who have spent almost 400 hours this year weeding, mulching, and planting native plants.

**WEST JERSEY TRAIL CREW**

**West Jersey Trail Crew**
The volunteers on the West Jersey Trail Crew work in several North Jersey parks. They meet at various locations and trailheads depending on their projects.

During our spring 2018 season, the West Jersey Crew spent 11 days improving trails in northwestern New Jersey. Over five work days, the crew removed and replaced more than 500 feet of boardwalk deck on the Appalachian Trail’s Pochuck Boardwalk. With three days’ work, the crew reopened the Dunnfield Creek Trail after a severe windstorm in May, removing approximately 40 blowdowns from the trail and repairing trail damage from uprooted trees. The crew spent two days installing retaining walls in areas of the A.T. along Dunnfield Creek where the trail edge was washing away into the creek, and adding drainage to limit further damage. In Tillmans Ravine, the crew spent a day repairing trail damage from trees uprooted during winter storms, removed blowdowns from the stream where they were causing trail flooding, and restored the flooded trail sections, thus enabling the park to open the trails for the season.

**Ramapo Trail Crew**
Volunteers and four Conservation Corps members serve in the “backyard” of Trail Conference Headquarters at Ramapo Valley County Reservation. In partnership with the Trail Conference, the Ramapo Trail Crew has become a group of hardworking stewards for trails and the environment at large. Two days a week, our 2018 crew of eight college students hit the trail in late May and worked on bench-cutting trails, setting stepping stones, remediation of abandoned trail, and more through August. In partnership with the Ramapo Trail Crew, we have been doing to improve public access to nature.

**Habitat Helpers Crew**
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**LINDA ROHLEDER**
Director of Land Stewardship

**NEW JERSEY**

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**LINDA ROHLEDER**
Director of Land Stewardship

**NEW JERSEY**
Trail Tramps

This dedicated group of volunteers works tirelessly in Westchester and Putnam counties and beyond, inviting newcomers to learn the tricks of the trade during their regular outings. The Tramps are capable of doing it all—from blaz- ing to bridge construction to working in free spaces. Where a trail needs help east of the Hudson River, the Tramps are ready to lend a hand. One highlight of this season has been fixing the muddy section of the Cliffdale-Teatown Trail in Teatown Lake Reservation.

Taconic Trail Crew

Volunteers and four Conservation Corps members are working on improving the trail experience on Breakneck Ridge. Working on the Under-cliff Trail in the shadow of Breakneck Ridge is no simple thing. Just to get up there is a climb—it is on Breakneck, after all—but every day, this crew hikes up the mountain to work on a slope quarrying stone for steps and making this trail safe for those who desire a quicker exit off the Breakneck Ridge Trail.

East Taconic Trail Crew

The volunteers of the East Taconic Trail Crew maintain trails at six parks in Westchester County, the biggest being Ward Pound Ridge, which encompasses over 4,300 acres and 36 miles of trails. The crew meets regularly on Fridays to design, build, repair, and maintain trails. As Ward Pound Ridge has many hills trails, a large portion of our work is in erosion control, bog bridging, water bars, and trail diversions. With three cer- tified sawyers in the crew, we also reduce the park staff workload in clearing blowdowns—especially on the more remote trails. We also work each year with interns from local schools and with corporate groups doing community service.

East Hudson

East Hudson

Our Conservation Corps members are always eager to meet and teach new volunteers. They’ll be in the field through Oct. 15; find an event near you at bit.ly/ct-adventure18 and get to know these incredible conservation leaders!

Bear Mountain Crew

Volunteers and five Conservation Corps members are working to complete the rehabilitation of the Appalachian Trail on Bear Mountain.

The historic Appalachian Trail relocation on Bear Mountain is nearing comple- tion; all steps have been positioned and the final preparations are being made to complete their installa- tion. Surfacing, trail closure, and restoration will finish the work. This crew is filled with experience and a pas- sion for the A.T. that plays a vital part in this year’s final push.

Hudson Nor’westers Trail Crew

Hudson Nor’westers Trail Crew volunteers build and restore trails primarily in Minnewaska State Park Preserve. This spring, the Hudson Nor’westers Trail Crew re- paired 236 feet of puncheon on the Jenny Lane Trail in Minnewaska. The old puncheon was rotted, slant- ed, and even underwater at times. The crew replaced the rotted planks and reset and raised the sill to make a level, even walking surface. A total of 34 people helped with the project. This fall, the crew will continue its work in Minnewaska improving the drainage on trails and building steps.

Long Distance Trails Crew

The volunteers on the Long Distance Trails Crew focus on building and restoring long-distance trails through- out the region.

Yorktown Trail Crew

When one mentions service to our nation and our communities, it is easy to immediately call to mind our military and first responders—as well it should. However there are people whose service goes unnoticed. AmeriCorps members around this country are serving, and this service, while differ- ent, is no less important or admirable than those mentioned above.

In their diversity and dedication, your Trail Conference Conservation Corps (TCCC) members are a true representation of all that is beautiful about our nation and our region. They come from different places, are of differ- ent ages, genders, and ethnicities, and yet they serve a common cause to enrich the experience of life—yet they keep push- ing through to drive remarkable results.

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WEST HUDSON

Palisades Crew

Volunteers and five Conservation Corps members are working to complete the new multi-use trail loop in Sterling Forest State Park.

Building the Munsee-Eagle/Red Back/Hutchinson loop has been a hard and gratifying roller coaster between hot, humid, bug-filled days and days so nice you’d prefer to be nowhere else. Countless rocks, branches, and roots later, the rugged terrain has been mostly tamed for hikers, bikers, and equestrians. See for yourself when the 7-mile loop officially opens on Sept. 30. (See page 2 for details.)

A Note of Gratitude

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News in Brief

Donna Chapman Named to NYS Trails Council

Donna Chapman, a Trail Conference volunteer since 2012, has been appointed the Trail Coordinator to the New York State Trails Council. The Trails Council is a collaborative sounding board for all trail activities and features representatives from a variety of user groups including, foot, wheelchair, snow, and motorized trail uses. The Council serves as a citizen advisory committee to act on behalf of trail user groups, as well as interface with a variety of state agencies such as Parks and DEC. Donna began her service with the Trail Conference as a maintainer of the Wiley Shelter on the Appalachian Trail. In 2014, she added maintaining a section of the A.T. to her duties. She also serves as the Appalachian Trail Community Ambassador for the Harlem Valley Appalachian Trail Community.

Allstate Foundation Grant Given to ISF

Special thanks to Invasives Strike Force volunteers Christina Di Sunno, who donated 18 hours of her time to support ecological stewardship and enabled us to receive a $500 Allstate Foundation Helping Hands Grant. The Allstate Foundation supports the causes that Allstate agency owners, financial specialists, and employees care about most by providing Helping Hands Grants to nonprofits where they volunteer their time to bring out the good in their communities.

Happy Trails to Alex Catskill Program Coordinator Alex Bradley has decided to pursue other opportunities outside of the region. Our best wishes go to Alex and his family in all future endeavors.

Protecting Trails and Land as Leaders in Stewardship

The ongoing development of our Trail Steward program has put the Trail Conference in a position to assist and educate more trail users than ever before. In May, we trained almost 40% of employees of not only the Trail Conference but also the state park departments of New York and New Jersey, as Trail Stewards. Stationed at popular trails across the region, Stewards provide outreach and information about park regulations, hiker safety, preparedness, Leave No Trace principles, and other best practices.

Our Steward training this year was expanded to include a more robust Leave No Trace certification, as well as natural resource protection education provided by the Hudson Highlands Land Trust. Serving New York trails at Bear Mountain, Breakneck Ridge, and in the Catskills, and at Terrace Pond in New Jersey, up to 15 stewards are on duty each weekend day.

In addition, two members of the New York State Excelsior Corps joined our Stewards at Breakneck Ridge for eight days in June. As Leave No Trace Master Educators, they performed hiker counts and advised visitors of safety preparedness for seven days straight. They administered a survey to visitors, allowing us to collect our first weekday data at Breakneck Ridge. The results of the survey are interesting; we learned that Breakneck attracts both new visitors (34 percent of respondents) as well as repeat hikers (21 percent have visited more than 20 times), meaning there is the potential for this park to have continually increased visitation numbers. These Stewards also collected data to calibrate electronic hiker counters at Breakneck Ridge.

Another first for the program was the addition of a volunteer Trail Steward at Breakneck Ridge in August. As we work to provide much-needed additional coverage at these high-usage trailheads, a volunteer program is a necessity. Find out how you can get involved by emailing volunteer@nynjtc.org.

Master Educators Increase Our Ability to Spread Outdoor Ethics

The Trail Conference takes land stewardship seriously. We work on the belief that the most effective way to bring real change for the environment is through public participation, sustainable, on-the-ground solutions, and user education. To support that value, we are proud to announce we have five new Leave No Trace Master Educators in our ranks. The Master Educator course is the top tier of Leave No Trace training, and our learning journey took place during the rainy week of July 23-27.

Backpacking for four days and three nights on the Ramapo-Dunderberg Trail in Harriman State Park, our Master Educators learned and practiced Leave No Trace skills and wilderness ethics through discussion, scenarios, hands-on activities, and teaching our first lessons in the field. Each day we hiked and stopped to discuss, scenarios, hands-on activities, and teaching our first lessons in the field. Each day we hiked and stopped to discuss, each path you take. We still advocate for today.

Taking this course on the first very trail the Trail Conference ever built almost 100 years ago was a truly special experience. Walking that path, you can almost feel the sense of adventure that blazed the passion and dedication for the outdoors we still advocate for today. Promoting these principles is exactly what’s going to protect this trail and many others for another 100 years.

We are excited to offer both the Leave No Trace Trainer course as well as Awareness Workshops. Join us in learning and practicing Leave No Trace principles and ensuring that the trails and natural areas we share are sustainable and accessible for all to enjoy for generations to come. Stay tuned for future workshops.
New Lenape Trail Guide in the Works

The Trail Conference is making the 34-mile Lenape Trail in Essex County, N.J., a destination for residents to explore the wide range of healthy outdoor activities found right in their own backyards. Thanks to generous support from the Partners for Health Foundation, over the last several years we have been able to make major trail reroutes that resulted in improved visibility, enhanced volunteer recruitment, and new partner connections and activities. The Trail conference mission was just the beginning.

The multi-use Lenape Trail offers landmarks, destinations, and points of interest throughout Essex County. A simple trail sign will not wholly describe these attractions, so we found it necessary to create an interactive guide to the Trail to motivate and inform users. In August, the Partners for Health Foundation renewed our support of our project with a $10,000 grant to create the Lenape Trail guide. With expert input from local museums, historical societies, and nature centers, the fully digital guide will enrich the Trail experience for county residents and所謂 new hikers, walkers, and volunteers. It is an essential tool for both promotion and consistent, stable management of the volunteer-maintained Trail. We thank the Partners for Health Foundation for allowing us to actively promote the wealth of usage opportunities along the Lenape Trail and make strategic infrastructure improvements to this unique semi-urban trail.

Coming in 2020: A.T. Vista

The Trail Conference is hosting A.T. Vista 2020, a multi-day event celebrating the Appalachian Trail. It will be held July 31 through Aug. 3, 2020, at Ramapo College of New Jersey in Mahwah. As organizers, the Trail Conference’s A.T. Vista Steering Committee is looking for volunteers who can help ensure the event runs smoothly and, most importantly, is engaging and fun for all ages.

Volunteer opportunities for A.T. Vista 2020 range from helping at the registration desk during the event to running the committee in charge of planning and overseeing the conference’s full slate of activities including workshops, hikes, and excursions. We have positions available for all interests and time commitments. Meet people who not only share your passion for hiking but will be traveling from all over the country to enjoy this event. Plus, volunteering to help run a four-day event is a great resume-builder. Visit atvista2020.org/volunteer to view the available roles and read job responsibilities. Fill out the volunteer interest form at bit.ly/vista-vol and some- one will get back to you within five business days. While you’re on the website, please take a few minutes to fill out a survey to help us plan activities for the event. Access the survey directly at bit.ly/atvistasurvey.

2019 Board, Voting Member Nominations

The Nominating Committee of the Trail Conference presents the following candidates for the Board of Directors for three-year terms and At-Large Voting Members for one-year terms. These nominations will be voted on at the Annual Meeting to be held Saturday, Nov. 3, at Trail Conference Headquarters (600 Ramapo Valley Road, Mahwah, N.J.). Meeting details are still being developed, but save the date.

DYLAN ARMAJANI, of New York, N.Y., is the Engagement Manager at Akamai Technologies. He also serves as President-elect of the Franklin Lakes Environmental Coalition. Dylan has served on the Annual Gala Committee for the Mohonk Preserve and on the Junior Board of United Neighborhood Houses of NYC.

Dylan is founder of the Trail Whippin Ass Running Club.

JUSTIN BAILEY, of Corona, N.Y., is the Volunteer Relations Manager for the Appalachian Mountain Club. He is a graduate of and instructor for the AMC Outdoor Leadership Training. Justin is also a Wilderness First Responder and a NYS licensed guide for hiking and camping.

SUSAN BARBUTO, of Franklin Lakes, N.J., is a Trail Conference Life Member. She is currently on the Membership and Development Committee and the Special Events Committee. She has a deep commitment to volunteerism in the community, serving on a variety of committees and organizations such as the Franklin Lakes Environmental Commission, the Board of Directors for Women’s Health Network, and the University of Vermont’s Rachel Carson School of Environment and Natural Resources Board of Advisors.

KATINA GRAY, of New York, N.Y., has an MBA and is an attorney with diverse experience in both the public and private sector. She is currently the Managing Director of Data and Operations at KIPP NYC, a leading charter school network. Katina is the NYC Board of Directors of Outdoor Afro, a national non-profit dedicated to African American connections and leadership in nature. She seeks to build an inclusive community for people to connect together outdoors.

KEN POSNER, of New York, N.Y., is a member of the Board and chair of the Membership and Development Committee. He serves on the Audit, Governance, Management, Nominating, and the Strategic Planning committees. Ken term on the Board is renewed through 2021.

DAVE STUHR, of Ho-Ho-Kus, N.J., is a Trail Conference Life Member and chair of the Audit Committee. He serves on the Audit Committee and the Finance Committee. Dave term on the Board is renewed through 2021.

The Trail Conference, founded in 1932, protects our trails and野生 spaces. We use the latest science and technology to provide everyone with a great place to hike on every day.

The Trail Conference is an independent not-for-profit organization and the steward of New York and New Jersey’s trail system.

TRADE WALKER • NEW YORK-NEW JERSEY TRAIL CONFERENCE

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Welcome, New Member Clubs!
Two new member clubs were approved by the Trail Conference Board in July.

- Proactive - AHW (Adventure, Health, and Wellness) has activities to encourage a proactive lifestyle through enjoyment of the outdoors, healthful living, and mental stimulation by creating exciting, original content that will motivate our followers to take action and to facilitate such action. Visit proactiveahw.com for more info.

The Yorktown Trail Town Committee is a volunteer committee that formed in September 2014 to promote the Town of Yorktown. Comprised of residents and business owners from the town, the committee seeks to promote the greater recreational, health, and social benefits to its residents and visitors through parks, trails, and open spaces located in the Town of Yorktown. Visit yorktowntrailtown.org for more info.

Can't find your club? This list represents all Trail Conference member clubs whose dues are up-to-date. If you have questions about your club's status, please ask your officers to contact the Membership and Development team at 201-512-9348.

Hikers’ Directory

- Canal Society of New Jersey
  www.canalsocietynj.org
- Catskill 3500 Club
  www.catskill3500-club.org
- Catskill Mountain Club
  www.catskillmountainclub.org
- Chinese Mountain Club of New York
  www.cmcny.org
- Church Communities Foundation - Plateau Community
  www.dabchof.org
- Closter Nature Center Association
  www.closetnaturecenter.org
- East Hampton Trails Preservation Society
  www.ehtps.org
- Flat Rock Brook Nature Association
  www.flatrockbrook.org
- Friends Of Garret Mountain
  friends@garretmountain.blogspot.com
- Friends of Pelham Bay Park
  www.pelhambaypark.org
- Friends of the Hackensack River Greenway in Teaneck
  www.teaneckgreenway.org
- Friends of the Old Croton Aqueduct, Inc.
  aqueduct.org
- Friends Of The Shawangunks
  shawangunks.org
- Frost Valley YMCA
  www.frostvalley.org
- German-American Hiking Club gah.nyhtc.org/
- Greener New Jersey Productions, Inc.
  www.greenernewjersey.com
- Hilltop Conservancy, Inc.
  www.hilltopconservancy.org
- Hudson Highlands Gateway Task Force
  www.TownofCortlandt.com
- Hudson River Greenway
  www.hudsonrivergreenway.org
- Hunterdon Hiking Club
  www.hunterdonhikingclub.org
- Interstate Hiking Club
  www.interstatehikingclub.org
- Little Stony Point Citizens Association
  www.littlestonypoint.org
- Long Path North Hiking Club
  www.schoharie-conservation.org
- Lark in the Park
  volunteer@nynjtc.org
- Leafs Of Yesteryear
  www.leafsny.com
- Leave No Trace Hike at Giant Ledge
  www.lntcentral.org
- Leave No Trace Hike at Giant Ledge on Saturday, Sept. 29, and a Lean-to and Campsite Restoration at Echo Lake on Sunday, Oct. 6. To register and find the full schedule of this year’s events, visit catskilllark.org.
- Long Path North Hiking Club
  www.lpark.org
- Long Path South Hiking Club
  www.lpspark.org
- Mohawk Preserve
  www.mohawkpreserve.org
- Morris County Park Commission
  www.morrisparksparks.net
- Mosaic Outdoor Mountain Club of Greater New York, Inc.
  www.mosaic-nyjc.org/joomla
- Musconetcong Mountain Conservancy
  mmmc.nyhtc.org
- Nassau Hiking and Outdoor Club
  www.nassauhiking.com
- Nelsonville Greenway Committee
  VillageOfNelsonville.org
- New Haven Hiking Club
  www.nhnhc.info
- New Jersey Forty Plus Hiking Club
  meetup.com/NJ-Forty-Plus-Hiking-Club
- New Jersey Highlands Coalition
  njhighlandscoalition.org/
- New Jersey Search and Rescue Inc.
  www.njsar.org
- New York Alpine Club
  www.nycaudubon.org
- New York Ramblers
  www.nyramblers.org
- Outdoor Promise
  outdoorpromise.org
- Palisades MTB
  facebook.com/groups/palisadestmb
- Proactive - Adventure, Health & Wellness
  www.proactiveweight.com
- Protect Our Wetlands, Water & Woods (POWWWW)
  box292.bluehost.com/~powwworg
- Rip Van Winkle Hikers
  newyorkheritage.com/rw
- Rock Lodge Club
  www.rocklodge.com
- RPH Cabin Volunteers
  rphcabin.org
- SAJ - Society for the Advancment of Judaism
  www.thesaj.org
- Salt Shakers Trail Running Club
  www.saltshakersrn.com
- Shelton’s Shooters Sussex 4-H Club
- Sierra Club Lower Hudson Group
  sierraclub.org/atlantic/lower-hudson
- Sierra Club Mid-Hudson Group
  www.sierrarockcliff.org/atlantic/mid-hudson
- Somers Land Trust
  somerslandtrust.org
- South Mountain Conservancy Inc.
  www.somoco.org
- Southampton Trails Preservation Society
  southamptontrails.com
- Storm King Adventure Tours
  www.stormkingadventuretours.com
- Sundance Outdoor Adventure Society
  meetup.com/Sundance-Outdoor-Adventure-Society
- SUNY Oneonta Outdoor Adventure Club
  www.oneonta.edu/outdoors
- Teatown Lake Reservation
  www.teatown.org
- Tenafly Nature Center Association
  www.tenaflynaturecenter.org
- The Catskill Center for Conservation & Development
  www.catskillcenter.org
- The Nature Place Day Camp
  thenatureplace.com
- The Outdoor Club, Inc.
  www.outdoorclub.info
- Thendara Mountain Club
  www.thendaramountainclub.org
- Town of Lewisboro
  www.lewisboronews.com/parksrec
- Trail Whippass
  www.trailwhippass.com
- TriState Rammers
  TSR.nyhtc.org/Schedules.html
- University Outing Club
  www.universityoutingclub.org
- Urban Trail Conference, Inc.
  www.urbantrail.org
- Valley Stream Hiking Club
  www.meetup.com/vshclub
- Wappingers Greenway Trail Committee
- Westchester Trails Association
  www.westchestertrails.com
- Westchester University High School Outdoor Club
- Yorktown Trail Town Committee
  www.yorktowntrailtown.org
Covering over 400 miles of trails and more than 325,000 acres of protected land in and around Catskill Park, the revised, 12th edition of our Catskill Trails map set will be your best resource yet for exploring the vast wilderness of the Catskills. Arriving in October or November, the new edition features several trail updates and additions; new, high-detail elevation information; improvements to the North/South Lake area inset map; up-to-date New York City watershed recreation lands; and many other adjustments.

Using new, detailed elevation datasets from USGS and New York State, the 50-foot elevation contour lines throughout the maps have been upgraded to provide a better representation of the rough terrain of the Catskills. In addition, more accurate and consistent summit elevations have been calculated based on these datasets, improving upon the values. The previous data were derived from various techniques and may not have always represented the actual high point of a summit; in some cases, these new summit elevations are a significant change from previous values.

The North/South Lake inset map has also been upgraded from 50-foot contour lines to 20-foot contour lines, helping to show the sometimes steep terrain in this area even better. Recent changes to the Kaaterskill Falls area are shown both in this inset map and as a new, small inset map that shows an enlargement of the trails near the falls. New trails have been added elsewhere on the maps, including at Overlook Mountain Wild Forest, Plate Clove Preserve, and the Catskill Interpretive Center, and several new and relocated lean-to shelters are shown. Many newly protected New York City watershed public access area lands are included, and several bike trail networks outside of Catskill Preserve lands are shown. Additional improvements and adjustments throughout the maps make this 12th edition of Catskill Trails the most accurate Catskills map set we have ever produced.

All maps include detailed trail mileages, parking areas, lean-tos, springs, viewpoints and other points of interest, UTM gridlines, and magnetic north lines. Detailed trail descriptions on the map backs have been updated with the latest trail changes. The map will be available in print format in vibrant color on our popular waterproof, tear-resistant Tyvek by shopping online at nynjtc.org or visiting our headquarters. In addition, it will be available in digital format on Apple and Android devices through the Avenza Maps app; learn more about our GPS-enhanced maps at nynjtc.org/pdfmaps.

Special thanks to all the volunteers and park partners who helped produce this map revision! The map set was produced with support from Ulster County Tourism.

YOUR PLANNED GIFT TO THE TRAIL CONFERENCE WILL:

Help us protect trails and trail lands for future generations. Preserve people’s connection to the natural world.
Create a personal sense of responsibility for our wild places.

Please consider including the Trail Conference in your will or as a beneficiary in an investment account or insurance policy today.

You can make a bequest by sharing the following sample language with your attorney:

I bequeath to the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference, Inc., a
not-for-profit organization, with principal offices located at 600 Ramapo Valley Rd, Mahwah, NJ 07430, the sum of $_______ (or _______%)
of my residuary estate, or of the share or interest I may have in any estate or property I may acquire or hereafter or subsequently receive, for the following purposes:

TO LEARN MORE AND GET MATERIALS, CONTACT:
Don Weise, Development Director
dweise@nynjtc.org | 201.512.9340 x813

If You Go
► What: “Walk With Us” group exhibition
► When: Now through Oct. 27 during regular Trail Conference hours, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Saturday
► Reception: Tuesday, Sept. 25, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.
► Where: Trail Conference Headquarters, 600 Ramapo Valley Road, Mahwah, N.J.
► Details: Find more at nynjtc.org

Botanical Artists Invite Visitors to ‘Walk With Us’

The Tri-State Botanical Artists (TSBA) of the New York Botanical Garden are pleased to announce their first exhibition, “Walk With Us,” on display at Trail Conference Headquarters through Oct. 27.

Twenty-two artists contributed works in an array of media. The exhibition features highly detailed, botanically accurate renderings of plants, fungi, and pollinators found in local trails and in gardens.

The TSBA is an active circle of the American Society of Botanical Artists, an international organization dedicated to the advancement of botanical art. Botanical and natural science art aids in plant identification and environmental awareness. A portion of the sales will benefit the work of the Trail Conference.

Dick Rauh—celebrated artist, botanist, and instructor—will be speaking at the reception on Sept. 25. He will discuss his journey in botanism, as well as an informative presentation on moss.

Gallery visitors are invited to vote for their favorite artwork from the show for the chance to win a $25 gift certificate to the Hiker’s Choice Marketplace. Vote for the Hiker’s Choice artwork through Sept. 25 by filling out an entry form at our headquarters.

Members of TSBA meet monthly at the New York Botanical Garden (NYBG) to discuss their artistic journeys, share works in progress, plan relevant field trips, and promote the TSBA. Many of the artists have been juried into international competitions and are instructors at NYBG, as well as other venues.

Visit asba-art.org or nybg.org for info.

Hikers’ Marketplace

GO PLACES WITH TRAIL MAPS AND BOOKS FROM THE TRAIL CONFERENCE

Our map combo offers all of our high-quality Trail Conference maps at a discount (members get an additional discount). Save big on shipping charges!

Find it on our online store under Combus.

Explore Harriman to the Palsades with New Map Sets

Newly revised and now available in print and digital formats, two new map sets help trail lovers explore parks from the George Washington Bridge to the Bear Mountain Bridge.

The Trail Conference’s revised, 12th edition of our Harriman-Bear Mountain Trails map set ($10.95; $8.21 for members), sponsored by Ramsey Outdoor, is a must-have for enjoying the network of trails in two of New York’s most popular state parks.

Our 6th edition of the Hudson Palisades Trails map set ($9.95; $7.46 for members), sponsored by REI, connects you to more than 100 miles of marked trails and bike paths along the western side of the Hudson River from Fort Lee, N.J., northward to Haverstraw, N.Y.

Get yours at nynjtc.org or Jeremy Apgar

Jeremy Apgar

Find all of our publications and select trail guides from others at nynjtc.org, and get your member discount!
Fall Photography Tips from the Trail

There’s no better time to get out and explore your favorite trails than fall, when the air is crisp and cool and you are surrounded by amazing colors. Susan Magnano of PhoTour Adventures has created a fall photography guide with tips and tricks for capturing your next autumn adventure.

PREPARE

Use nynjtc.org to scout your favorite trails. Be prepared for the elements. Bring layers, rain protection, and sturdy boots, along with a hard copy of a map, compass, water, and snacks.

GEAR

The best camera is the one you have with you, but we recommend bringing an SLR camera and a range of lenses from 17mm-200mm. Your subjects for fall photography can vary from an epic landscape to a single leaf on a log. Wide angle lenses (17mm-40mm) can be used to capture a whole scene and telephoto lenses (70mm-200mm) can be used to zoom in on an interesting detail in the landscape.

UNDERSTAND LIGHT

Overcast conditions may not be your first thought of ideal weather conditions for foliage, but think again. Overcast light is Mother Nature’s softbox—it eliminates harsh shadows and highlights, creating soft and even light. Wet leaves are more vibrant than dry leaves; combined with overcast skies, it can lead to perfect conditions for capturing brilliant colors. Since you will have less sunlight, you will have to increase your ISO or use a slower shutter speed with a tripod.

LOOK FOR LEADING LINES

Look for leading lines that guide your eyes through the image to the main subject of your photo. For example, use the path of the trail or a fallen tree branch that directs your eye into the frame and helps tell your story.

PAST PEAK?

So, the colors aren’t as bright, and the trees are looking bare. But don’t fret—there are still great images to be taken. Barren trees and muted colors are interesting. Look to the ground to find some bright remnants of fall.

To learn even more, join Susan on a fall photo workshop in Harriman State Park on Oct. 23 or Oct. 28, or for a five-day photo adventure in Acadia National Park. Check out upcoming workshops at www.photouradventures.com.

Support trails, parks, and open space in the region by joining the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference.

The Trail Conference maintains more than 2,100 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:

25% Discount on Trail Conference books and maps when purchased directly from the Trail Conference. Get a 10% discount on Trail Conference logo goods. Visit nynjtc.org/shop.

Great Discounts at supporting outdoor retailers and other businesses. See our full list of partners at nynjtc.org/retail-partners.

Free Enrollment in our Trail University introductory courses.

Workshops and Seminars on trail maintenance and construction, leadership training, wildness first aid, environmental monitoring, GPS operation, and more. Find details at nynjtc.org/trailu.

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

Join now at nynjtc.org/membership.