MAINTAINING 2,144 MILES OF TRAILS IN NY AND NJ

WE STAND UP FOR TRAILS

No matter what side of the political spectrum you're on, one thing we all value has come up for debate in the national conversation: the protection of public open space and our continued access to it. When conservation and stewardship are viewed as minor affairs by federal policymakers, the effect trickles down to the work of the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference. Several looming issues may significantly impact local parks and trails in the near future.

While it's not likely a marquee park such as Yosemite or the Grand Canyon will be resolved quickly or quietly. The Trail Conference maintains trails in three areas managed by the National Park Service—the Appalachian Trail, Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, and Morristown National Historical Park. We proudly support these vital arms of the government as our partners. The Trail Conference also support trail building and maintenance efforts in New Jersey's Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge and Wallkill National Wildlife Refuge; both managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. (Additional federal lands are overseen by the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service.) The Trail Conference proudly supports these vital arms of the government as our partners. This conversation, in turn, intensifies the issue on a state level. In the greater metropolitan New York area, the Trail Conference has been involved in open space protection since the 1930s. We have played an important role in the preservation of Storm King Mountain, the creation of Sterling Forest State Park, and the formation of several state forests along the Long Path. Our advocacy work and role in purchasing key parcels of land for transfer to state ownership continues to aid in the creation and expansion of public parks. It allows us to improve access to the outdoors through the building of a better trail experience.

As the significance of open space is debated, funding for the agencies that manage public lands on both the federal and state level—will be scrutinized even further. Without proper operating budgets, the possibility that these parks will be forced into piecemeal closures is very real. That's why Trail Conference representatives travel to Albany, Trenton, and Washington, D.C., to meet with elected officials and speak about the importance of access to nature for all. We raise awareness about our work building, maintaining, and protecting trails, and the health and economic benefits associated with experiencing the outdoors. Find out more about our conservation and advocacy efforts on pages 6-7. Though the federal government's role in the protection of public lands is in question, one thing is certain: The people of the Trail Conference—members, donors, volunteers, and staff—will always take a stand for responsible access to public open space. Through a commitment to making a difference on trail lands in our region, we can all secure the value in our trails, our parks, and our connection with nature.

Recruitment as Activism

Making a difference starts in our own communities. The Trail Conference works to improve the trail experience in a relatively small but incredibly diverse region: from NYC to the Catskills, the Water Gap to Breakneck Ridge—all the places that make this area so incredible to explore.

Help Save AmeriCorps, Help Improve Trail Lands

At the time this issue of Trail Walker goes to print, there is another threat to the work of the Trail Conference: the potential elimination of AmeriCorps from the federal budget. This program provides the structure of the Trail Conference Conservation Corps and the funding to provide AmeriCorps Education Awards to our Corps members. The Trail Conference Conservation Corps leveraged 602 community volunteers in over 5,132 hours of service last season. Together, our Corps members and volunteers inventoried and maintained more than 124 miles of trail, improved/built over 4 miles of trail, and improved over 70 acres of our public lands. AmeriCorps is one of the many ways that the Trail Conference is able to engage our community in service, and we encourage everyone to spread the word that this program deserves funding. AmeriCorps not only works to improve parks, it's training the next generation of conservation leaders. Learn more about how you can help save AmeriCorps at bit.ly/tc-sac17.

Through our partnerships with land managers, these trail lands are protected and cared for by our members, donors, volunteers, and staff—outdoor-loving people just like you. YOU can make a difference to ensure our parks and trails remain open and safe for all to enjoy. Please consider making a gift to the Trail Conference at nynjtc.org/donate. Your support has never been more important.
Show Your Love of Trails at Our National Trails Day Open House

National Trails Day is an event held across the country recognizing the power trails have in connecting people with nature. On Saturday, June 3, the Trail Conference will be celebrating National Trails Day with an open house at our historic headquarters in Mahwah, N.J. In partnership with REI, we’ll be hosting guided hikes through Ramapo Valley County Reservation and stewardship opportunities— including a litter pickup and invasive removal—to help make a difference at this popular park, located right next door to our building. We’ll be leading tours of our 125-year-old headquarters, where you can check out an art exhibition dedicated to the beauty of wildflowers. Our friends from REI and some of our other partner organizations will also be sharing ideas on ways to engage with trails and nature year-round. Refreshments will be available. Check nynjtc.org/events for more details.
The Trail Conference is a resilient organization. We have been true to our core mission for our 97 years of existence, making sure that people of the greater New York metropolitan area have been able to enjoy trail outings countless times. There have been good times and bad, including the Great Depression and World War II, and delays of vacuous development while demand for outdoor recreation has been strong.

We face trying times now. In some ways, we are a casualty of our own success. We creased our trail stewardship from 1,300 miles to more than 2,300 over the first 15 years of this century. Even so, there is more demand, and need, for our services now than ever before. This is predictable as operating budgets of parks have declined or remained stagnant while acreage and usage have gone up. In the last several years, we have noticed a growing number of destination persons are becoming unseasonably popular, apparently driven by the explosive pace of information on the internet. To help mitigate the impact of overuse, we have deployed field managers to some of the most distressed locations and adjusted the way we promote these areas, encouraging users to seek alternative but equally spectacular trails.

State and county trails aside, we now have a U.S. government threatening to defund programs that protect our environment, provide access to public lands, and respond to catastrophic climate change. Federal bills to defund AmCores, Fish and Wildlife, and the EPA, as well as dispassionate talk about climate change and science in general, have become regular headlines. The turmoil is of real concern.

Yet the Trail Conference will persevere. As a steward of the organization’s legacy, our resiliency is something that is always on my mind. The Trail Conference carries on because we respond to a never-ending need with an everlasting resource: people who care. Our members, donors, staff, and especially our volunteers are the key to our resiliency. The Trail Conference’s strength has never been self-promotion or fundraising. But there have been, and always will be, people eager to care for and grow trail networks and other ways to connect with nature.

What does this perpetual impulse come from?

Many have commented on an innate human desire to experience nature. After evolving as hunter-gatherers for generations, simply walking in the woods connects us with a primal part of the human experience. It is about as close as we can get to who we were designed to be. People are drawn to parks and outdoor recreation as a way to connect physically, emotionally, and spiritually with the natural world and oneself. Many have found that volunteering to protect the nature within us all provides an even more profound connection.

Love of nature is a perpetual resource that not only increases the resiliency of our park systems, but will also help to conquer problems both local and global. When you consider helping the Trail Conference, think about more than trails and maps. Your support of this organization is about building the capacity and resiliency of the outdoor recreation system in your own project completion, and the larger region. Together we can do this.

Edward Goodell
Executive Director
egoodell@nynjtc.org

**Multi-Use Hutchinson Trail Opens in Sterling Forest**

SONA MASON
PROGRAM COORDINATOR

The Trail Conference is pleased to announce the official opening of a new, single-track, multi-use trail at Sterling Forest State Park on Saturday, March 25, at 11 a.m. The 3.5-mile Hutchinson Trail heads southward from the caretaker parking lot off of Long Meadow Road, where the ribbon-cutting ceremony will take place, through a beautiful hemlock forest. It joins up with the Red Back Trail, passing by the Red Back mine and smoker, remnants of the days of iron mining at Sterling Forest. The southern terminus is at the South Gate road parking lot, near the junction of Buttonwood Drive.

Former Sterling Forest park manager Jeffrey Hutchinson, after whom the new trail is named, will cut the ribbon. It was his wish to open up this area of the park to a diverse group of users for non-motorized travel, including hikers, mountain bikers, equestrians, and mountain bikers.

The trail is a joint project of the Trail Conference, Sterling Forest State Park, and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historical Preservation. Thousands of hours of labor have gone into the building of this trail by the Trail Conference’s Palisades Crew, alongside many local biking and mountain-biking volunteers, who often worked long into the winter, after most trail crews had packed their tools away for the season.

The trail has been designed to incorporate a pleasing sense of flow, with speed controls and good sight lines for harmonious use. An eastern loop, the Eagle Mountain section, is currently under development. Once completed, it will join with the Hutchinson Trail to create a 7-mile loop. Please join us for a hike/rise on the new trail after the ceremony. Wear comfortable shoes, dress for the weather, and bring water and a lunch. For more details, visit bit.ly/tc-hto17.

**News Brief**

**Wildflowers Exhibition Call for Entries**

The Trail Conference is accepting submissions of artwork for a group exhibition depicting wildflowers. Works done in all two-dimensional media will be considered, including photography. The exhibition is scheduled to run June 2 through Sept. 29 at Trail Conference Headquarters.

Each artist may submit digital images of up to three artworks for an entry fee of $15. The works should depict wildflowers, or be inspired by wildflowers. Species that grow in this general area are preferred, but not required. Work must be framed and ready for hanging. Email your submission to nynjtc-hto17@nynjtc.org. Submission deadline is Monday, April 17. For more information, visit bit.ly/tc-wfe17.

**Shop AmazonSmile, Support Trails**

Visit AmazonSmile and designate the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference as your charitable organization of choice. A percentage of your eligible purchases are donated back to us by AmazonSmile. For more details, visit bit.ly/tc-amazonsmile.
Matching Challenges Double—and Triple!—Your Gift to Trails

Long-Distance Trails Memorial Grant
This fund was created to honor the memory of volunteer Jakob Franke, whose contributions to the Long Path and Shawangunk Ridge Trail were immeasurable. The donor will match your gift of $500 or more to benefit the Trail Conference’s work on the Long Path. Shawangunk Ridge Trail, or any public parkland through which either of these trails runs (examples: Harriman State Park, Schunnemunk Mountain State Park, Minnewaska State Park Preserve, Catskill Forest Preserve). The Tuxedo Trails Project is also eligible for this match.

**Minimum Donation:** $500, with the option to pledge your amount over multiple years

**Matching Challenges: Double—$$2 for every dollar contributed.**

**Instructions:** Write “Long Distance Trails” in the name of an eligible park in the special instructions box when donating online, or in the memo line when writing a check. Donor matching funds will go to the Long Path/Shawangunk Ridge Trail only.

Tuxedo Trails Improvement Project
Donations will fund re-construction and improvements to Harriman trails accessible from Tuxedo, N.Y., including the Ramapo-Dunderberg (built in 1991) and Kekau trails.

**Opportunity:** Donations of $500 or more will be additionally matched by the Long Distance Trails Memorial Fund (until that fund reaches its limit).

**Instructions:** Write “Tuxedo Trails” in the special instructions box when donating online or in the memo line when writing a check.

Catskills Summit Steward Fund
Donations will support our growing Summit Steward program in the Catskills. After two successful seasons aiding and educating hikers, we are looking to expand the program to other locations to help even more people have a fun, safe, and responsible time on the trails.

**Minimum Donation:** None

**Matching Challenges:** None

**Instructions:** Write “Catskills Summit Steward Fund” in the special instructions box when donating online, or in the memo line when writing a check.

MRCC/Trail Conference 5K Race & 3K Walk Set for May 21
Join us for the third annual Mahwah Regional Chamber of Commerce/Trail Conference 5K Race & 3K Walk at Trail Conference Headquarters on Sunday, May 21. Starting at Trail Conference Headquarters at the restored Darlington Schoolhouse, the relatively flat, 3.1-mile course features the scenic Ramapo Reservoir and River, the beautiful Hunt & Polo Club neighborhood, and Ramapo College’s historic Havemeyer House. The course follows a combination of paved roads, wide woods roads, and well-maintained grass and dirt trails.

The course finishes back at the Darlington Schoolhouse, where food, an awards ceremony, and free tours await. On-site registration opens at 7:30 a.m., start time for the 5K is 9 a.m. Proceeds benefit both the Trail Conference and MRCC. For more info and to preregister, visit bit.ly/3K17. If you’re interested in volunteering at the event, email volunteers@nynjtc.org or call 201.512.9348.

Memorial to Honor Jakob Franke May 20
Friends and family will honor the extraordinary life and service of Jakob Franke, a tireless volunteer and remarkable leader who dedicated himself to the Trail Conference’s mission for nearly a quarter century, at a memorial service on Saturday, May 20, at Trail Conference Headquarters. Further information on the memorial will be posted at nynjtc.org/events.

Jakob’s influence extended beyond his passion for trails and trail lands to the volunteers he recruited with his friendly, welcoming attitude and infectious enthusiasm. He was awarded the Trail Conference’s highest honor, the Raymond H. Torrey Award, just five days before his passing on Nov. 10. His legacy will impact outdoor recreationists for generations to come.

Ramapo Trails Fund
Your gift of any amount will be double-matched to support trail improvements in Ramapo Valley County Reservation and adjoining properties in Bergen County, N.J.

**Minimum Donation:** None

**Matching Challenges:** $2 for every dollar contributed (1-to-1)

**Instructions:** Write “Ramapo Trails” in the special instructions box when donating online or in the memo line when writing a check.

Zakim Tool Fund
Donations to the Zakim fund go toward the purchase of trail-building tools and equipment.

**Minimum Donation:** None

**Matching Challenges:** None

**Instructions:** Write “Zakim Tool Fund” in the special instructions box when donating online or in the memo line when writing a check.
The Restoration of the Long Pond Ironworks Bridge

The rebuilding of the bridge at Long Pond Ironworks State Park crossing the Wanaque River—washed away in 2011 by Hurricane Irene—was finally completed at the end of 2016. How could a “simple” hiking trail footbridge take so long to rebuild? We break down the process.

February 2012: The Trail Conference works on a New Jersey Recreation Trails Program (RTP) grant application to help fund construction of a new bridge. Due to bank erosion, the old, 30-foot crossing now needs to be 70 feet long.

January 2013: The RTP is awarded by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP). Staff turnover at the Trail Conference puts the project on hold for several months.

April 2014: Scouting begins to plan construction. This photo shows the crossing of the Highlands Trail, Sterling Ridge Trail, and Hasenclever Iron Trail from the western bank of the Wanaque at that time. Your ankles would get wet without a bridge, to say the least!

July 2015: Volunteer Tibor Latincsics provides the ability to survey the site and prepare permits. His expertise is critical at every stage of the project.

December 2015: Trail Conference staff, volunteers, and NJDEP partners compile the large permit packet for final submission and approval. It contains a New Jersey Recreation Trails Program (RTP) grant application to help fund construction of a new footbridge.

September 2016: The final permit is received. The following month, Tibor fords the river for measurements with Steve Bianco of Marlboro Mountain Construction assists.

September 2016: Ground is broken for the project. Marlboro Mountain Construction, with help from Trail Conference staff, begins construction of the abutments. Paul Frost, President of the Friends of Long Pond Ironworks, is on hand to ensure that nothing of historical or archeological significance is disturbed.

October 2016: The abutments, now completed, are almost 10 feet tall. Much of these structures will be buried underground and invisible to hikers.

November 7, 2016: Trusses are delivered by Tahawus Trails. Cold temps and rain don’t stop volunteers, including several members of the Long Distance Trails Crew, from contributing nearly 100 hours to the project.

October 2016: The bridge finally stands complete. Hikers can once again utilize the long distance Highlands Trail, access the historic Hasenclever Iron Trail, and follow the Sterling Ridge Trail into Sterling Forest State Park.

Peter Dolan

The German Hollow Lean-to Takes Flight

Over a year ago, a pile of logs was delivered to the Catskill Interpretive Center in Mt. Tremper, N.Y. They were destined to become two new lean-tos, thanks to a generous grant from REI. One would replace the German Hollow Lean-to that was crushed by trees in 2009. The other would replace the Batavia Kill Lean-to near Windham.

In 2016, volunteers worked through the heat and other unsavory weather conditions to construct these lean-tos. Each piece was carefully labeled, then the completed lean-tos were dismantled for transport by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC). Due to the remoteness of their final locations, the lean-to bundles would need to be flown to their destinations via helicopter.

This January, the German Hollow lean-to took flight. It was successfully delivered to its new site on Dry Brook Ridge. Special thanks to the NYSDEC Forest Rangers and the New York State Police Aviation Unit for their hard work in making it happen.

This spring, the Batavia Kill shelter will be flown into its new site near the existing lean-to. And then we get to work! The final steps involve putting the pieces together like Lincoln Logs—but we need your help. Site prep, the construction of the foundation, and the setting and spiking of logs, roof boards and shingles is needed to make these new lean-tos safe and usable for the public.

For more info or to sign up to be part of Catskills history, email catskills@nynjtc.org.

Doug Senterman
CONSERVATION & ADVOCACY

Our voices are one of the most powerful tools we have in ensuring trail lands remain protected, open, and safe for all people to access. That’s why Trail Conference staff and volunteers traveled to Albany over several days this winter to speak with elected officials about the importance of connecting people with nature. This year, we focused on the following issues:

FEBRUARY 7

Catskill Park Awareness Day
As a member of the Catskill Park Coalition, the Trail Conference asked state representatives to support a $10 million “Catskills Package” derived from funding sources that include the Department of Environmental Conservation Aid to Localities budget and the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF). This funding would directly support the Trail Conference projects, and we asked representatives to back its full funding.

MARCH 2

Empire State Trail Advocacy Day
In January, Governor Cuomo announced his commitment to completing and connecting the Empire State Trail. This 750-mile, multi-use trail will connect New York City with the Canadian border via the Hudson River Greenway and Champlain Canalway Trails, and Albany with Buffalo via the Erie Canalway Trail. The Empire State Trail will act as a spine connecting many Trail Conference-maintained trails through Westchester, Putnam, Dutchess, and Columbia counties—and beyond. The Trail Conference is an active participant in the New York State Greenway Gap Analysis initiative out of Albany to help identify existing trails, proposed trails, trail connections, and missing gaps. The Greenway has been adopted by the Empire State Trail as a working framework upon which to build a fully connected Greenway Trail from Battery Park in Manhattan to the Adirondacks. It is approximately 50 percent complete. The Trail Conference asked representatives to support the completion of the Greenway and Empire State Trail and the increased access it will bring to our trails.

FEBRUARY 14

EPF Day
In January, Governor Andrew Cuomo proposed a $300 million appropriation for the 2017 Environmental Protection Fund, continuing the historic funding level he established for the EPF last year. The EPF directly supports the Trail Conference by funding all New York State acquisition of public open space. The EPF funds our rehabilitation of trails on Bear Mountain, including the original section of the Appalachian Trail, as part of the Bear Mountain Trails Project. It funds the Lower Hudson Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management, for which the Trail Conference serves as the host organization. The EPF is an annual avenue of support for Trail Conference projects, and we asked representatives to back its full funding.

MARCH 13

Park Advocacy Day
The Trail Conference supports the continued revitalization of the New York State park system, home to a significant number of trails that are protected, open, and safe for all people to access. That’s why Trail Conference staff and volunteers traveled to Albany over several days this winter to speak with elected officials about the importance of connecting people with nature. This year, we focused on the following issues:

This is a big year for the New Jersey Legislature—all seats are up for re-election in the Assembly and Senate. KIG will be working to educate all candidates on the importance of open space preservation. In tandem with that effort, KIG is circulating a resolution of Support for Open Space and is working to promote it in communities and counties across the state. If you think this is something your town would like to adopt, message Keep It Green on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram for more details.

Lastly, we’ll be working with Keep It Green in celebrating the inaugural New Jersey Open Space Month in June. Additional information will be available soon; check nynjtc.org for details.

Adam Page Taylor
Revisiting the Battle for Storm King

The beauty of the Hudson River Valley was a legendary subject for artists during the 19th century. They portrayed its bucolic settings and humans in harmony with nature as the physical manifestation of God’s work on Earth. More than 100 years later, those sentiments would be tested as never before. In the fall of 1962, Trail Conference Conservation Chair Leo Rothschild raised the alarm that Consolidated Edison of New York, the nation’s largest utility company, planned construction of a pumped-storage hydroelectric power plant at Storm King Mountain on the Hudson River, 40 miles north of New York City. Over the next 18 years, Con Ed’s clash with environmentalists would culminate in the abandonment of the project.

In Power on the Hudson, author Robert D. Lifset offers an original case study of this monumental event in environmental history, when a small group of concerned local residents initiated a landmark case of ecology versus energy production. He follows the progress of this struggle, as Con Ed won approvals and permits early on, but later lost ground to concerned citizens and local organizations—including the Trail Conference—who were able to raise questions about the potential damage to the habitat of Hudson River striped bass.

Lifset uses the struggle over Storm King to examine how environmentalism changed during the 1960s and ’70s. He also addresses the financial challenges and increasingly frequent blackouts faced by Con Ed, along with the pressure to produce ever-larger quantities of energy. As Lifset demonstrates, the environmental cause was greatly empowered by the fact that through this struggle, for the first time, environmentalists were able to gain access to the federal courts. The cause was greatly advanced by adopting scientific evidence of ecological change, combined with mounting public awareness of the environmental consequences of energy production and consumption. These became major factors supporting the case against Con Ed, spawning a range of new local, regional, and national environmental organizations and bequeathing to the Hudson River Valley a vigilant environmental awareness. A new balance of power emerged, and energy companies would now be held to higher standards that protected the environment.

If You Go

- Book Talk and Signing: Power on the Hudson by Robert Lifset
- When: Saturday, April 29, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
- Location: Fort Lee Historic Park Visitor Center, Hudson Terrace, Fort Lee, N.J.
- Description: Professor Lifset discusses the historic battle to save Storm King Mountain and its impact on environmentalism and the utility industry. Sponsored by the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference and the Palisades Interstate Park Commission. For more information, call 201.512.9348, ext. B13.

Discovering New Jersey—and a Part of Himself—on the Highlands Trail

At 43 years old, lucky in health, family, love, and financial stability, my life nonetheless felt devoid of something elemental. So, I did what any soul-searching New Jerseyan would do—I decided to hike across the state to figure it out, guided by the trail blaze of the Highlands Trail.

A few years ago, I started obsessively watching TV shows like Survivorman and Dual Survival, drawn to them for a reason I couldn’t explain. I had gotten into hiking later in life, at 37 years old. My only real outdoor experiences growing up were on a Jewish teen tour out West when I was 15. Yet I felt compelled to go into the woods, on my own. I read a lot and studied a lot, trying to eliminate the fear of the unknown. I started slow, then eventually immersed myself in exquisitely wild places like Norvin Green, Abram Hewitt, and Waywanda.

Deeper research was required to hike the entirety of the Highlands Trail in N.J. My first step in this adventure was to become a mapmaker, piecing together trail and road maps, so I could visualize the whole trail as one. I mentally walked the trail inch by inch, mile by mile, breaking it down into digestible daily hikes that ranged anywhere from 3 to 10 miles long—identifying the starting and ending points by the circled “P” on the map. I compiled a play-by-play spreadsheet of all the hikes, including points of interest, maps to use, estimated distances, parks/forests I’d see (18) and counties I’d pass through (six). It totaled 20 hikes and over 100 miles. Actually doing the hikes was an entirely different matter. Every day was a new and different adventure and logistical challenge, which I documented on my website, davidmblanke.com. I started on January 6, my birthday. I hiked across the Highlands Trail to be with me and the beauty of the world. I hiked it to pause the texts, emails, likes, follows, tweets, and other madness. I hiked it because I wondered, with the onslaught of real estate development happening in New Jersey, if there might not be any real forest—anything wild—left in the coming years.

The biggest lesson I learned: Exploration is the lifeblood of the fully lived life. By challenging ourselves to do things we have never done before, maybe even seemingly outrageous things, we forge a strength that we never believed was possible from a place we never knew was there.

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LG Groundbreaking a ‘Win-Win’

The Trail Conference and four other conservation groups joined LG Electronics at a groundbreaking ceremony for the new LG North American headquarters in Englewood Cliffs, N.J., on Feb. 7. The groups had previously raised concerns about the original proposed height of the building adjacent to the New Jersey section of the Palisades Interstate Park. A lawsuit was filed in 2012 by the New Jersey State Federation of Women’s Clubs, Scenic Hudson, and Trail Conference members Margo Moss and Jakob Franke. A series of grassroots advocacy efforts to persuade LG to build below the tree line followed. LG and the groups reached agreement in 2015 on a new design, which all parties celebrated as a “win-win” solution. Read more at bit.ly/tc-lg17.

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The challenge of protecting our environment from invasive species is ever present in the greater New York metropolitan area, where global commerce invites global threats into our area. New York State has pledged increasing support for the issue of combating invasive species—$12 million last year, which was nearly double from 2015. As leaders of the Lower Hudson Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (LHPRISM), the Trail Conference is doing our part to protect the rich biodiversity of the region.

Lower Hudson PRISM is one of eight regional partnerships in the state of New York funded by the Department of Environmental Conservation through the Environmental Protection Fund. The Trail Conference’s Director of Land Stewardship, Linda Rohleder, is the Lower Hudson PRISM program coordinator.

The LHPRISM is made up of more than 45 partner organizations. The Trail Conference guides these partners in developing strategies to ensure our invasive species management efforts will be of the most benefit. Collectively, we focus on likely areas of introduction and methods of early detection and rapid response. We gather and disseminate information, engage volunteers, and educate the public.

Last year was very successful in the fight against invasive species in the Lower Hudson region. Here are some of our achievements in 2016.

Partner Invasives Removals
LHPRISM partners have teamed with the Trail Conference’s Invasive Species Force Conservation Corps to manage invasive species throughout our region.

• To prevent the spread of mile-a-minute into northern areas of New York, which have not yet seen this invasive, our ISF Crew worked with Trillium ISM and Scenic Hudson in Esopus, N.Y., focusing on creating a suppression scenario in cutting into the population from the edges to contain it.

• To find out more about what the Lower Hudson PRISM is doing to combat invasives, visit lhiprism.org and our Facebook page @LHPRISM.

• The ISF Crew also worked with Trillium ISM, New York City DEP, and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Putnam County to monitor and control giant hogweed, a federally listed noxious plant.

• The New York Botanical Garden, in collaboration with the Bronx River Parkway Reservation Conservancy, conducted a survey of the Bronx River in Westchester to determine the extent of the incised fumewort infestation, first detected in the river in 2005.

• Several partners also teamed with the Trail Conference Conservation Corps members. Every Wednesday, one is invited to help us dig up invasive plants on weekends throughout the summer. Our southern pine beetle trap monitors learn how invasive insects affect forest health. Trap monitors are assigned a beetle trap located along a ridge trail in a New York State park or forest, which is checked every two weeks. Trap contents are sent out to the Department of Environmental Conservation lab for evaluation. Endangered plant monitors are taught about rare and endangered plant communities along the Appalachian Trail. They receive an assignment of a species to find and check on within a specified location.

• Interested in learning more about the Invasive Strike Force and becoming an ISF warrior in the fight against invasives? Get in touch at invasives@nymtc.org. —Heather Darley

Aquatic Invasive Species
In aquatic systems, prevention is the best method of dealing with invasive species. That’s because once a water body is invaded, treatment becomes very difficult, costly, or simply impossible. Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, based in Beacon, N.Y., leads the LHPRISM aquatic program. In 2016, 40 locations were surveyed for aquatic invasive species. Volunteer stewards inspected 3,137 boats at three locations, and spoke with 3,300 boaters. An additional 2,700 people were reached at events. In addition, SOlitude Lake Management worked to survey the Croton River for hydrilla tubers and monitor the population growth of this invasive invader first spotted in the river in 2013.

Block Buster Survey
The Block Buster Survey focuses on searching for a targeted list of invasive plant species in 3x3-mile blocks throughout the Lower Hudson Valley. By spreading our survey efforts and searching in likely locations for invasive species, we hope to fill in gaps in our knowledge about various species distributions, and also make some early detections. In July, our Cornell Cooperative Extension offices trained 115 volunteers to survey for our focal invasive plants for the Block Buster Survey program. The Lower Hudson region was divided into 377 blocks, and 112 of these blocks were assigned to our surveying volunteers. So far, we have received data from 74 blocks—or close to 20 percent—of our total blocks in the region and have identified several early detection locations. We plan to run this survey effort every year.

Education for Gardeners
Hudsonia LLC and the Cornell Cooperative Extension office in Rockland County developed additional training on native alternatives to invasive ornamental plants, as well as other educational materials.
ASK A TRAIL BUILDER

What are the characteristics of a sustainable trail?

KEVIN SIMPSON
Bear Mountain Field Manager

When designing and building trails, the aim is to create a sustainable product. The end result should be a trail that fits into the surrounding landscape lightly and with little disturbance or negative impact to the environment. A sustainable trail will require less maintenance, provide positive user experiences, and withstand the test of time.

We can understand what makes a trail sustainable by breaking it down into five key elements:

1. The Half Rule
2. 10 Percent Average Grade Guideline
3. Maximum Sustainable Grade
4. Grade Reversals
5. Outslope

Take a look at the diagram to the right. The left side of the trail follows sustainable design; the right side does not.

In the sustainable trail, notice the relationship between the trail’s grade and side slope (the grade of the mountain). A trail’s grade shouldn’t exceed half the grade of the side slope. This is the half rule.

The second principle defines the average grade of an ideal trail as 10 percent, or as close to 10 percent as possible. That is, for every 100 feet of trail, elevation gain or loss is 10 feet. The maximum sustainable grade is calculated by examining the relationship between such factors as the half rule, soil type, watershed, climate, number of grade reversals, user type, number of users, and difficulty level. To avoid the erosion seen in the unsustainable trail sections in this diagram, grade reversals are used. A grade reversal literally refers to reversing, or changing, the grade of a trail—going downhill to uphill, and then back downhill again (or vice versa). Good grade reversals take advantage of the land’s natural contours, allowing water to drain or shed off the trail.

Also helping to minimize erosion is the trail’s outslope. This is the downhill tilt of the tread, which should be at least 5 percent. Outslope, also known as cross slope, allows water to drain or shed off the trail.

By implementing these elements into the design and build process, we are doing our part to not only develop sustainable hiking trails, but also protect hiking trail lands. Through our use of these best practices, we can help educate the public in the responsible use of trails and the natural environment.

To get a first-hand look at these techniques, sign up for one of our trail design and layout workshops offered through the Trail Conference’s award-winning Trail University program at nynjtc.org/volunteer.

Hikers’ Directory


Long Island Greenbelt Trail Conference www.lisgreenbelt.org

Flat Rock Brook Nature Association www.flatrockbrook.org

Interstate Hiking Club www.interstatehikingclub.org

Chinese Mountain Club of New York www.cmcny.org

Long Path North Hiking Club www.scholarie-conservation.org

AMC Mohawk Hudson Chapter http://www.amcmohawkhudson.org/

ADK Mid-Hudson Chapter www.midhudsonadk.org

Nelsonville Greenway Committee VillageofNelsonville.org

ADK New York Chapter www.adkny.org

Hunterdon Hiking Club www.hunterdonhikingclub.org

New Jersey Search and Rescue Inc. www.njsar.org

Musconetcong Mountain Conservancy http://mmc.nynjtc.org

East Hampton Trails Preservation Society www.ehtps.org

TriState Ramblers http://TSR.nynjtc.org/Schedules.html

Southampton Trails Preservation Society http://southamptontrails.org

University Outing Club www.universityoutingclub.org

WWW http://www.westhike.com/

The Outdoor Club, Inc. www.outdoorclub.info

Valley Stream Hiking Club meetup.com/vshclub

Tenafly Nature Center Association www.tenaflynaturecenter.org

Sierra Club Mid-Hudson Group newyorksierracclub.org

Protect Our Wetlands, Water & Woods (POWWW) box292.bluehost.com/~pownww.org

Boys Scouts of America-Northern NJ Council www.njbsa.org

Friends Of The Shawangunks http://shawangunks.org

Rip Van Winkle Hikers http://newyorkheritage.com/rvw

Westchester Trails Association www.westhike.org

New York Ramblers www.nyramblers.org

Boy Scout Troop 8, Brooklyn

Protectors of Pine Oak Woodswww.stpino.org

Thendara Mountain Club www.thendaramountainclub.org

Monhon Preserve www.mohonpreserve.org

Nassau Hiking and Outdoor Club www.nassauhiking.org


NYC Outward Bound Center www.nycoutwardbound.org

Friends of Pelham Bay Park www.pelhambaypark.org

Boy Scout Troop 121-Hudson Valley Council

Rolling Contour Trail:
Undamaged
Trail on Flat: Flat, Even, Raked and Wide

Fall - Line Trail:
Eroded, Rutted and Wide

The Highlands Natural Pool

The Storm King School http://www.skst.org

Lake Hopatcong Foundation

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.
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For my father, Torlief Meloe—the ultimate TRAIL WALKER

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Many of your maps show trail mileages directly on the front. How are these mileages calculated?

Mileage numbers—a much-requested feature—first appeared on our 2010 Catskill Trails map. To create an accurate dataset of mileages, volunteers Dave and Carol White with the Adirondack Mountain Club provided wheeled measurements of nearly all trails on the map. They physically walked the trails with a measuring wheel, capturing every zig and zag. Since 2010, we have placed mileage numbers on more than half our maps, including Harriman-Bear Mountain, South Taconic, West Hudson, and just this past fall, Kit-tatinny and Sterling Forest. Many users find them extremely helpful for planning or navigating, so we examine whether mileage numbers can be included with every map revision.

The source of the mileage numbers has varied with each map. For our Harriman-Bear Mountain map, all trails had been wheeled for our Harriman Trails book, so this dataset formed the basis of the mileage numbers. To address recent relocations and new trails, we used GPS-derived, elevation-corrected mileages calculated using ArcGIS. ArcGIS is the professional Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software that I use to organize trails data. Trail routes are typically captured by volunteers using handheld GPS units, since mileage information collected by the devices can be unreliable. I use my GIS software to edit the data and produce clear trail lines. I then use elevation data to create elevation-corrected lines, since the terrain in our area can add upwards of 20 percent to flat-line distances. Once these lengths are calculated, we often compare a sample against known wheeled lengths as a verification step.

Aside from Sterling Forest, which also had a reliable dataset of wheeled measurements, the remaining maps have all primarily relied on GIS-calculated mileages. For these reasons, readings from your GPS unit or mobile device might differ from the map mileage. But I and our dedicated volunteers take great care in ensuring the mileages are as accurate as possible. If you’re interested in collecting data that can go into making the maps, email me at apgar@nynjtc.org.

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Staying in the Loop

Campgaw Mountain County Reservation in Mahwah, N.J., is in most seasons a refuge from the crowds across the road at Ramapo Valley County Reservation. Campgaw’s 9 miles of hiking trails include a panoramic view from a mountaintop shared by skiers during winter months. As of February, the trail system is easier for newcomers to navigate through reconfiguration into a six-loop network.

Campgaw’s new look is a consequence of the successful implementation of a 9-mile, five-loop system that was inaugurated last August in the Ramapo Reservation’s core recreational area. One of Bergen County’s goals in approving a loop system was to reduce the increasing number of lost hiker calls from inexperienced trail users. Happily, Parks Superintendent Todd Cochran reports that the loop network has achieved that goal at Ramapo Reservation. This outcome contributed to speedy county approval for the similar loop plan at the county-owned Campgaw Reservation.

Campgaw’s loop network comprises the following trails:
- **Old Cedar Trail**: red; loops 2.8 miles and connects with all other trails; rated moderate
- **Rocky Ridge Trail**: blue; loops 1.6 miles from Park Drive parking lot and accesses NYC skyline views atop Campgaw Mountain; rated moderate
- **Hemlock Trail**: orange; loops 0.7 mile around Fyke Pond; rated easy
- **Dogwood Lane**: pink; loops 1.1 miles from Park Drive parking lot; rated easy
- **Backslope Trail**: yellow; loops 1 mile on west side of mountain from Old Cedar Trail; rated moderate
- **Silver Trail**: silver; loops 1.45 miles from/to south side of Old Cedar Trail; rated easy-to-moderate

The Campgaw trail loop plan was proposed by Trail Chair Chris Connelly and New Jersey Program Coordinator Peter Dolan, with input from Campgaw Trail Supervisor John Moran. Six weeks after obtaining Bergen County approval, John Moran completed all relaying necessary to establish the loop system. For detailed hike descriptions of the Campgaw trail network, visit bit.ly/nc-cmch.

For more information, visit bit.ly/nc-cmch.

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Tax deductible. Dues are not refundable.

**HIKE**

**Details**

- **Trail**: Six loops
- **Park**: Campgaw Mountain County Reservation, Bergen County, N.J.
- **Difficulty**: Easy to moderate
- **Length**: 9 miles total
- **Dogs**: Allowed on leash
- **Features**: Views, historic features

**HIKES**

- **Old Cedar Trail**: Easy to moderate; 2.8 miles; connected with all other trails
- **Rocky Ridge Trail**: Blue; 1.6 miles from Park Drive parking lot; accesses NYC skyline views atop Campgaw Mountain
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