For more than a decade, land managers and environmental organizations have been debating how to solve one of the biggest threats to the integrity of our public lands: increasing ly high visitation. In 2020, at the height of a pandemic that prompted more people than ever to find relaxation and refuge in nature, the issue seemed to reach its tipping point.

As literal and figurative trailblazers in environmental conservation for 100 years, the Trail Conference has taken a leadership role in coordinating stewardship efforts to keep up with the challenges of high use and misuse. There is no one answer to solve these issues; it’s our belief that we can create better outdoor experiences through user education, public participation, and sustainable, on-the-ground solutions.

Here’s a look at where we’re focusing efforts this season:

More efficient recruitment and onboarding = more volunteer power
When in-person activities were suspended in 2020, we pivoted to online volunteer recruitment and training. We created engaging digital con tent that allowed us to reach more people than we ever imagined possible. That resulted in more volunteers trained and assigned to more positions than ever before.

Our volunteer ranks remain steady this season, meaning there are more people caring for the region’s trails and natural areas just as these places are seeing more visitors. Additionally, our increased efforts to recruit volunteer leaders and implement new, more extensive training processes are also paying off, which results in a better experience for both our volunteers and those who enjoy the trails and parks under our care.

Emphasis on user education and outreach
You’ll be seeing more Trail Conference Stewards in more places this year, which will allow us to engage, one-on-one, with more people looking for a safe, enjoyable experience outdoors. Our Conservation Corps Stewards are serving at Breakneck Ridge in Hudson Highlands State Park Preserve, on the Appalachian Trail at Bear Mountain State Park, at the Croton Gorge Unique Area in Westchester County, on several summits in the Catskills, and at Gertrude’s Nose and Verkeerderkill Falls in Minnewaska State Park Preserve. You’ll find our volunteer Stew ards stationed at the Ashokan Rail Trail in the Catskills, and in Hudson Highlands and Fahnestock state parks. Partners whose own Stewards have received training by the Trail Conference include New York State Parks, Rockland Conservation & Service Corps, and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

That “face time” on the trail allows Stewards to provide helpful outreach and information about park regulations, hiker safety, preparedness, and other best practices. In addition to reading hikers, Stewards help discourage and mitigate misuse of trails and the surrounding lands. This year, that includes trail maintenance trips and creating an educational video series.

Smart expansion
When we look to expand our stewardship efforts, we look for the projects that will have the most positive impact on both the public and the land. This year, we’re expanding trail construction work in Morris County, N.J., with the addition of a dedicated Conservation Corps crew. And our Ecological Stewardship programs continue to offer more volunteer opportunities to help preserve native ecosystems. The volunteer-led New Jersey Invasives Strike Force will work its first full season combatting invasives in the Garden State, while volunteer surveyors for spotted lanternfly got their first training this spring.

Finding solutions together
To truly serve the areas of the greater New York metropolitan area, we must work together with the other agencies and partners doing the work that continues to sustain open space in this region. The Trail Conference is proud to be a founding member of the New York Outdoor Recreation Coalition (NYORC). Members of the statewide NYORC are committed to building a more equitable outdoors through investment and being an active participant in creating welcoming spaces for historically marginalized and underrepresented communities. Through our participation in NYORC, we are stakeholders in the Open Spaces for All initiative spearheaded by the Open Space Institute. The overarching goal of this effort is to identify innovative policies, programs, initiatives, and creative partnerships to support and engage a growing and increasingly diverse constituency of park users. Further, this plan will support implementation of the state’s services, offerings, and operations to equitably meet these needs and demands. The Trail Conference also continues to serve on Gov. Andrew Cuomo’s Catskill Advisory Group, a strategic planning advisory group that is developing a framework to help balance public use needs in the Catskills, as well as on the New Jersey Trails Council.

With the help of our partners and supporters, we aim to gain greater investment in our mission so we can tackle whatever challenges we face this year—and for the next 100 years.
You’re Invited to Our Centennial Gala

One hundred years ago, the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference was founded by outdoor-lovers who believed the weariness of fast-paced, modern life could be cured by a walk in the woods. Today, the demand for outdoor recreation is at an all-time high as people turn to nature to relax and recharge after an extremely challenging year. Since 1920, the Trail Conference has been a literal and figurative trailblazer in the conservation movement. Every time our volunteers step on a trail, they are embodying the values of an organization that strives to provide safe, enjoyable opportunities outdoors and inspire a deeper appreciation for the care that natural areas require.

We invite you to join us at our Centennial Gala on October 16 at the Bear Mountain Inn to celebrate this legacy of service—100 years of empowering people to connect with nature and protect the land they love. To mark this milestone, we will be honoring Dr. Lucy Rockefeller Waletsky—philanthropist, environmentalist, and longtime Trail Conference champion. Our program will include live entertainment, a three-course meal, and local drinks. Following all New York State health guidelines and protocols, tickets will be limited and safety precautions will be in place.

Mark your calendars and visit nynjtc.org/events for full details and to RSVP.

We are moved by nature; we are united by trails. We hope to see you there!

Welcome, New Board Members

New Board members Deanna Cubrleth and Mary Ann Villari were appointed to the Trail Conference Board of Directors in April. Deanna Cubrleth was elevated to head coach of Sarah Lawrence College’s men’s and women’s cross-country teams in 2017. She previously served as assistant coach upon her arrival in 2013. An avid trail runner, Deanna’s many accomplishments include back-to-back runner-up finishes at the USATF Trail 100 Mile National Championship (2012 and 2013), as well as back-to-back wins (2012, 2013), including a course record, at the Pain to Pain Trail Half Marathon.

Mary Ann Villari is a lifelong hiker, skier, and bedrock philanthropist. Mary Ann holds a BA from Bowdoin College and a JD from Boston University Law School. After practicing corporate real estate law for many years in New York City, Mary Ann served as Chief Operating Officer and General Counsel for Broadway Housing Communities, a not-for-profit organization that provides supportive and affordable housing for low-income and formerly homeless adults and families. Over two decades, she led the development of hundreds of units of housing, two early childhood centers, and a new cultural institution, including the Sugar Hill Project in Washington Heights. Mary Ann served on the Board of Trustees of Bowdoin College and is currently a member of the Finance and Governance committees of the Trail Conference.

Earth Day Gratitude

This Earth Day, we came together as a trail community to make a powerful stand for safe, enjoyable access to nature and its protection, both now and for future generations. Healthy ecosystems deserve sustainable trails and responsible visitors; we aim to ensure our experiences outdoors allow nature to thrive. Thanks to your support, we raised over $37,000 to protect parks and trails. Special thanks to our two anonymous donors and Cereus Financial Advisors, LLC, who provided the generous match for this campaign. We are so grateful for your generosity!
**Annual Trail-a-Thon 100-Mile Challenge Kicks Off Sept. 13**

Trails give us so much: from respite to adventure to a pathway toward physical, mental, and emotional health. Our Second Annual Trail-a-Thon, running Sept. 13 through Oct. 31, is a chance to support sustainable trails and healthy parks. Explore a favorite park, or even hit a treadmill! While ticking off your miles, you’ll also have the opportunity to raise money for the Trail Conference and protect the land you love in the process. Last year’s inaugural event was a huge success! This year’s Trail-a-Thon will help raise awareness and financial support for our mission into our second century.

Registration to accept the 100-mile challenge opens August 31. This allows each participant time to set up a virtual fundraising page, join a virtual team, and share your reason for accepting this challenge. The official challenge is 100 miles, but that doesn’t mean you can’t do more—or less! The Trail-a-Thon is about getting outdoors, connecting with nature, and celebrating the Trail Conference’s 100 years of stewardship. Trail-a-Thon participants are encouraged to reach out to family, friends, and colleagues to support your efforts in making an impact. Interested in joining as a corporate team or becoming a sponsor? Email jzuck@nynjtc.org.
Support for Our Work Creates Better Experiences in Nature

Subaru Showms Commitment to Great Trails

Subaru is committed to giving back to local charities and doing their part to protect the environment. That philanthropic spirit is helping to fuel the training and support of Trail Conference volunteers this season.

Liberty Family of Dealerships Shares the Love

During Subaru of America’s annual Share the Love event, Liberty Subaru in Emerson, N.J., once again named the Trail Conference as a Hometown Charity. From mid-November through the beginning of January, for every new vehicle purchased or leased at Liberty Subaru, $250 was donated to the charity designated by each buyer/lessee.

Additionally, the owners of the Liberty Family of Dealerships decided to “share the love” at Liberty Hyundai and Genesis in Mahwah, and Liberty Kia in Ramsey. When Trail Conference members bought or leased a new car from the Liberty Family of Dealerships and selected us as their charity of choice, Liberty donated $250 to our efforts.

Through the Share the Love event, Liberty Subaru donated more than $47,000 to the Trail Conference mission.

Thanks to the generosity of the Liberty Family of Dealerships and our Trail Family, more than $47,000 was donated to the Trail Conference. Our thanks to Liberty and everyone who chooses to support the Trail Conference mission!
So That Future Generations May Have Trails to Explore

The Trail Conference is fortunate to have dedicated benefactors supporting its mission, including many who have chosen to secure its future through planned gifts. To express our appreciation for this committed group of donors who have remembered the Trail Conference in their estate plan, we established the Trail Angel Society. Members of this special group share the common bond of generosity and vision to ensure that the trails and natural areas we share are sustainable and accessible for all to enjoy for generations to come.

Trail Conference Life Member, current Board member, and environmental activist Sue Barbuto reflects on why she has chosen to become a Trail Angel:

“My parents raised us to believe in contributing, in being part of our communities and the institutions that benefit us all. They believed that the generations before us invested and planned for what we use and enjoy today—be they libraries, hospitals, or parks. The Trail Conference represents that kind of ‘institution’ and ‘infrastructure’ to me. More than 100 years ago, foresighted hikers and nature lovers started to preserve and maintain land and trails so that I and others could enjoy their dream of access to the outdoors today. We are certainly at a crossroads—pun intended—in our area when support for trails and everyone’s access to them has been heightened, thanks to the pandemic. Becoming a Trail Angel is my effort to continue long-term financial support to an organization that has been preserving and maintaining the beautiful nature and local trails that I have enjoyed and hiked over many years.

My commitment will ensure that future generations have the same great trail experiences that I have had throughout my lifetime.”

We invite you to join Sue and others who share your passion for nature by becoming a member of the Trail Angel Society. Simply submit the non-binding form below or at nynjtc.org/trail_angel.

Yes, I Want to be a Trail Angel! Confidential Pledge Challenge Form

I am pleased to inform you that I have named the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference as a beneficiary of my estate plan. I understand that this is a non-binding statement. Although I intend this gift to remain in force, this document does not constitute a legally binding pledge.

My future gift:

☐ is percent of my estate worth
☐ is in the specific amount of $____________

☐ Is an amount I would prefer to keep private. This is my best estimate at this time and the amount of any future gift may be different.

Trail Angel Society:

☐ Please list me publicly as a member of the Society. My name should appear as __________________________

☐ Please DO NOT list my Society membership publicly. I prefer to remain anonymous.

Kindly return this completed form to: Development Director, Planned Giving, NY-NJ Trail Conference, 600 Ramapo Valley Road, Mahwah, NJ 07430

Please contact us with any questions: 201.512.9348 x813, dweise@nynjtc.org

TRAIL CONFERENCE SUPPORTERS

Thank you for your generosity and passion for trails and natural areas—thanks for your support of the Trail Conference!

TRIBUTES
February 1, 2020 - April 30, 2021

In honor of Susan and Joe Barbuto
Don Weise
In honor of Brent Boscarino
Poughkeepsie Public Library
In honor of Kay Cynamon
Richard Spola
In honor of Melissa Giynn
Tammy Jaco
In honor of Caitlie Stryka and Steve Goldberg
Cynthia Seibel and John Kolp
In honor of John and Marianne Gunzer
John and Marianne Gunzer Memorial Charitable Fund
In honor of Aaron Guttenplan
ANL Bontempo
In honor of Palikades MTB
Shepard Grinker
In memory of Sandy Beck
Karen Beck
Amanda Boyle
Paula Fuchs
Jaila Latif
Joseph Pedorella
Margery Rosenberg
Jake Struck
In memory of James Cooper
Richard Foster
In memory of Phyllis Key
Eileen Prior
In memory of Andrew Lowder
Cynthia Eldridge
In memory of Lisa Mueller
Alicia Vaccaro
In memory of Frank Peloso
Amy Cosmus
Marie De Lorenzo
Jesse Dupuis
Nancy Houtz-Costa
Amy Lachapelle
Kathryn Limetta
Joseph Massaro
Kathleen McDermott
Janet Patterson
Mary Jane Peloso
Michael Peloso
Teresa Peloso
Stephanie Richards
Diane Sawicki
Bill Taggart
Ludovic Trimpert
Mary Ullmann
Cristen Willer Abeasis
Kelsey Williams
Linda Williams
David Yedid
Kristine Zboray
Michael Zboray
Diane Zelesnikar
In memory of Norman Reicher
Jody-Lynn Reicher
In memory of Warren Rosner
Bob Gurian

A Renewed Bequest Challenge

Over the last two years, Robert C. Ross has inspired our trail family to ensure the longevity and financial stability of the Trail Conference by becoming Trail Angels. Believing in the importance and power of “paying it forward,” Robert has committed to our Bequest Challenge and will contribute $500 of “new” funds to the Trail Conference when someone indicates that he or she has made a bequest or a provision in their estate plan that benefits the Trail Conference.

Your bequest intention form is non-binding; people can change their minds as their circumstances change. The form is to show that you are making plans now, but you have every right to change them later. If you’ve included the Trail Conference in your estate plan or plan to do so, use this form to let us know: nynjtc.org/trail_angel. Even if you’ve told us previously, we can benefit now from our generous donor. Just fill out the form and take advantage of this exciting Bequest Challenge.
The Westchester Trail Tramps, a Trail Conference chapter founded by Mary Dodds over 10 years ago, have focused on restoring and improving the Briarcliff Peekskill Trail (BPT) since January 2020. The BPT became a priority after crew leaders Michael Pashley and Connie Stern walked the trail from Watch Hill Road to Byrder Road, about 9 miles. They encountered several impassable sections covered with blowdowns and brush. The entire trail needed action to restore this linear corridor to the Conference standards: making it inviting to hikers, protective to the environment, and within its resources. They knew they had the ability of a crew of talented Trail Tramps at the ready. But they also knew the trail lacked the resources. They knew they needed a generous donor to tackle projects beyond the rebuilding and renewing the Briarcliff Peekskill Trail (BPT).

Meanwhile, COVID-19 halted trail work. Trail Conference plans. "I was immediately impressed by the project," says Michael. "It was almost beyond repair. We are involving local agencies and the Trail Conference, who then contacted us. We immediately responded," Connie says. "We told him of our plans to rehab the trail. He immediately responded, "I was impressed by the trail."

The funding assured, the next step was to inform Westchester County Parks Division, who heartily approved their plans. Michael and Connie accepted the challenge and set the Tramps to work. Meanwhile, COVID-19 halted trail work. Trail Tramps continued planning via Zoom sessions until, masked and socially distanced, they began carrying out the plans in June 2020.

The most ambitious of the projects was to construct a boardwalk spanning a water-filled marsh, restoring the old and adding additional lengths of new boardwalk was produced, along with the repair of about 80 feet, giving hikers a high and dry path through the night to Damascus, Va., to celebrate and promote the Trail Conference’s work along the Appalachian Trail at the 34th annual Trail Days festival. Our main message to current thru-hikers, past thru-hikers, and A.T. lovers was Protect the Land You Love. We educated festival-goers on Leave No Trace principles and explained how the Trail Conference built the first section of the A.T. We also talked about trail maintenance and corridor monitoring. We connected regional hikers to their home states’ trail club and recruited a bunch of new volunteers from New York and New Jersey to give back when they finish their hike. We had 700 visitors to our booth. It was great to represent the Trail Conference!

Thank you
Thanks to the Trail Conference funders, Michael Pashley and Connie Stern; members Mary Ayers, Marilyn Blaho, Rose Bonanno, Jane Daniels, Walt Daniels, Stuart Faust, Bob Gurian, Phil Hedingberger, Dave Margules, Mary Anne Massey, Helen Pashley, Martha Rabinson, Fred Stern, Steven Russ, Ken Whalen. TRAILS FOR PEOPLE

Generous Donor Funds East Hudson Trail Tramps Projects

A quarterly look at some of what we have been doing to improve public access to nature.

TRAILS FOR PEOPLE

The Mashipacong Trail was one of the first trails to be improved in New Jersey. The project was to construct a boardwalk spanning a water-filled marsh, restoring the old and adding additional lengths. Michael calculated the amount of lumber and supplies they would need and designed the boardwalk’s course. "With our generous funding," Michael says, "we were able to order the needed lumber and have it delivered nearby."

One hundred sixty feet of new boardwalk was produced, along with the repair of about 80 feet, giving hikers a high and dry path while protecting the sensitive plants and wildlife habitats from incursions when hikers attempted to bypass standing water and mud. During the construction, hikers admired the work and thanked the crew for their efforts. The new additions were not just functional, but also landscape-friendly, meandering through beautiful parkland with fresh blazing and clear tread throughout.

Having wrapped up that project, the Trail Tramps look forward to improving additional wet and eroded areas of the BPT while continuing maintenance of the entire trail.

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Connecting with Local Hikers at Trail Days
In May, volunteers Moe Lemire, David Hans, Greg Calabrese, and Barbara DeLade drove 670 miles through the night to Damascus, Va., to celebrate and promote the Trail Conference’s work along the Appalachian Trail at the 34th annual Trail Days festival. Our main message to current thru-hikers, past thru-hikers, and A.T. lovers was Protect the Land You Love. We educated festival-goers on Leave No Trace principles and explained how the Trail Conference built the first section of the A.T. We also talked about trail maintenance and corridor monitoring.

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West Jersey Crew: Keeping Feet Dry and Trails Safe

This spring, the West Jersey Trail Crew got off to a busy start. So far, we have installed two larger stone-step stream crossings on the Deep Root Trail in Stokes State Forest, as well as several smaller ones along the way. Then it was more step-stones along the Stony Brook Trail in Stokes, and servicing and installing water bars and drains on the Appalachian Trail in Washington State Forest. In High Point State Park, the crew rerouted a section of the Mashipacong Trail from a badly eroded road drain to a more sustainable, walkable alignment. In Jenny Jump State Park, we created a new extension to the Orchard Trail, facilitating its role in the new Solar Walk recently installed in the park by the adjacent amateur astronomy club.

We’ll be working through June; email us at westjerseycrew@trailstobuild.com or contact volunteer@nymtc.org if you’re interested. Come have fun playing in the dirt! 

Thank you
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The quietly spectacular southern Shawangunk Ridge passes through many newly preserved parks and forests such as Shawangunk Ridge, Roscoe Gap, Wurtsboro, Huckleberry Ridge and Gobbler’s Knob. Run Wild, Inc. and the Trail Conference’s running group, Trail Conference Trail Runs, recently met to explore and celebrate the preservation of Gobbler’s Knob. Hikers and runners got to explore the preserved greenway, visiting rocky outcrops, deep woods, and scenic views of the Bashakill. Run Wild partners with the Trail Conference and other organizations to raise funds for land conservation, through running races and other activities.

Don Weiss
Board Member Aims to Raise Awareness While Hiking Long Path

Meet Charlie Gadol. Trail Conference volunteer, Board member, and race organiz-er. He’s hiking the Long Path this summer in support of our work.

As an active participant in advancing the Trail Confer-ence’s mission, Charlie has decided to put his feet to the test—hiking 375 miles of the Long Path—to benefit the or- ganization. This summer, he will set out to section-hike the Long Path, walking the length of the trail in northern New Jersey, to the reservoir in the Catskills that I love so much, and on up to the Hel-ders. Running the length of most of this terri-tory, the Long Path has always fascinated me because it unites such varied terrain—from the Palisades, with its Hudson River views, to parks like Harriman, to lesser known stretches like Schune-munk and Gobbler’s Knob. It threads its way close to my home in the Gunks and con-tinues over the rocky scram-bles in the Catskills that I love so much, and on up to the Hel-ders.

Years ago, I thought about running the whole way, but now that I am older, I will be happy just to hike it and sa-tisfy all of my hiking goals and desires,” Charlie says. “This will not be a thru-hike or run in the tra-ditional sense. My plan is to hike some sections on a daily basis and go home at night, but occasionally enjoy camp- ing along the way, taking ad-vantage of everything that our new Long Path Trail Magic group has to offer!”

Interested in exploring the Long Path with Charlie? Join him on one of his day trips: willow333@ earthlink.net.

You can help cheer Char-lie on his journey and sup-port him in meeting his goal of raising $1,500 for the Trail Conference mission! Con-sider making a gift in honor of Charlie today at bit.ly/tc-charlie21.

Conservation Corps Season Preview

The Conservation Corps’ Outreach and Education Trail Program consists of two crews: the Hudson Valley Trail Stewards and the Catskill/Minnieawa Trail Stewards. The Hudson Valley Trail Stewards are led by returning member Rosa Bledsoe and consists of 11 Trail Stewards, including returning members Melanie Schuck, Conor Dob-sen, Jennifer Meikle, and Rose Eid. They will be educating the public every weekend and holiday at Breakneck Ridge, Bear Mountain, and Croton Gorge Unique Area. The Stewards this year will also be con-ducting maintenance along the Long Path, as well as other locations throughout the Hud-son Valley.

The Catskill/Minnieawa Trail Steward Crew is led by returning member Myra Ro-mano and consists of seven Trail Stewards who will be stationed at several key locations in the Catskills (Burroughs Range Loop, Blackhead Range, North Point, Giant Ledge) and two locations in Minneawa State Park Preserve (Gertrude’s Nose, Verkeerderkill Falls). The Stewards will be conducting maintenance along the Long Path, as well as other locations throughout Minne-awaska. This year, both crews will be tasked with the creation of a video series aiming to ed-ucate the public about these hiking destinations, as well as the Leave No Trace principles.

By removing emerging invasives, the ISF Crew aims to eradicate them.

Invasives Strike Force

The Corps’ Invasives Strike Force (ISF) consists of four crew members led by crew leader Kassidy Robinson. They will primarily be managing emerging invasive species—ones that are new to the area with limited populations—with the goal of completely eradicating them from the re-gion. Other projects include managing invasive species that im-pact rare, threatened, and en-dangered species or habitats to help the native plants thrive.

The ISF will be working on trails, rivers, and major water systems. They will be tasked with creating a video series aiming to educate the public about invasive species monitoring, management, education, and outreach. This season, the crew is monitor-ing invasive and native plants, macroinvertebrates, and wa-ter quality in 37 lakes, ponds, and rivers, as well as manag-ing waterbodies at 14 sites throughout the Hudson Valley. They’ll also teach boaters and anglers about AIS spread pre-vention and inspect boats at three Hudson River launches as a part of the Lower Hudson PRISM Watercraft Inspection Steward Program. The crew will be led by Maya Thompson, joined by returning Corps members Claire McMahon and Sudha Pethur.

The AISF crew is man-aged in part by the LHPRISM Aquatic Invasive Species Pro-gram, hosted by Teatown Lake Reservation.

Conservation Corps Crews Season Preview

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The AISF crew is managed in part by the LHPRISM Aquatic Invasive Species Program, hosted by Teatown Lake Reservation.

Our new High Point supervisors noted a bridge that was becoming a hazard on the Iris Trail and made repairs using materials at hand. The volunteers who worked on this project are: Ed Duvinski, Robert Remillard, Kevin Mitchell, and Don Kenny.

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The Conservation Corps’ Outreach and Education Trail Program consists of two crews: the Hudson Valley Trail Stewards and the Catskill/Minnieawa Trail Stewards.

The Hudson Valley Trail Steward Crew is led by returning member Rosa Bledsoe and consists of 11 Trail Stewards, including returning members Melanie Schuck, Conor Dob-sen, Jennifer Meikle, and Rose Eid. They will be educating the public every weekend and holiday at Breakneck Ridge, Bear Mountain, and Croton Gorge Unique Area. The Stewards this year will also be conducting maintenance along the Long Path, as well as other locations throughout the Hudson Valley.

The Catskill/Minnieawa Trail Steward Crew is led by returning member Myra Ro-mano and consists of seven Trail Stewards who will be stationed at several key locations in the Catskills (Burroughs Range Loop, Blackhead Range, North Point, Giant Ledge) and two locations in Minneawa State Park Preserve (Gertrude’s Nose, Verkeerderkill Falls). The Stewards will be conducting maintenance along the Long Path, as well as other locations throughout Minne-awaska. This year, both crews will be tasked with the creation of a video series aiming to ed-ucate the public about these hiking destinations, as well as the Leave No Trace principles.
Every summer, my family delights in spending long weekends in the Adirondacks, where we can kick back and swap stories around a campfire. Who doesn’t enjoy a gooey smores, laughter, and the send of summer? But what types of settings can provide? Whether outdoors or indoors or for ambiance or heat, these fires require wood to serve their purpose. But where is that wood coming from?

Unfortunately, many invasive species that have devastated our region’s forests are introduced through moving firewood from an area of infestation to a previously uninvasied area. Eggs, adults, seeds, and diseases caused by invasive threats may be moved in this manner. In fact, the movement of firewood and subsequent introduction of forest pests and diseases into new habitats are believed to be responsible for between $4.2-$4.4 billion per year in damages, management costs, and lost revenue in the United States. Let’s avoid moving the destruction caused to our beloved ash trees by the invasive emerald ash borer (EAB) to understand the dire consequences that accidental introductions through movement of firewood can have on our forest ecosystems. All species of ash trees are susceptible to EAB and the pest kills nearly every untreated ash tree it inhabits. Once trees are infested, they become extremely hazardous, losing 80% of their structural integrity within 3-5 years, making it not only an ecological issue but a safety threat as well. And it’s not just EAB that has been introduced and continues to spread through firewood introductions. Ash-long horned beetles and gypsy moths are two more of over 140 forest pests and diseases that may be moved through firewood. With the imminent threats posed by spotted lanternfly and leaf diseases such as oak wilt and beech leaf disease, there’s even more reason to be mindful of what and how we are transporting goods, including firewood, across borders and ecosystems. Fortunately, the Trail Conference is leading the charge to combat these forest pests before they can take hold. Our Conservation Dogs duo of Fa-gen and Dair are trained to sniff out both oak wilt (a fungus that causes rapid mortality of oak trees, especially red oak) and spotted lanternfly, helping to detect and prevent further spread of these species in our region. Through the Lower Hudson Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM), we are helping to promote and encourage participation in the citizen science-powered Monitoring and Managing Ash (MaMA) program to search for lingering ash trees, or those trees that stay healthy in the midst of an emerald ash borer infestation. We do this in the hopes of restoring ash through grafting and selective breeding of these robust trees. We are also working with the distribution of beechnut disease (BLD) in our region through our Invasives Strike Force Eco-quest Challenge program, in hopes of better understanding the primary means of spread of BLD so we can prevent future introductions.

With the 2021 camping season underway, the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation recently released new guidelines and regulation reminders regarding firewood transportation to promote healthy ecosystems. The current regulations include prohibiting movement of untreated firewood in the state and prohibiting untreated firewood grown more than 50 miles from its source.

If we can all band together to use only locally sourced or properly treated firewood and commit to not transporting wood long distances, we can continue to enjoy the warmth of a good campfire without fear of accidental introductions of invasive species. For more information on firewood as a method of spread of forest pests or to learn how you can help in the efforts to prevent the spread of invasive species, visit dontmovefirewood.org.

Federal Aid Proposed in Fight Against Lyme Disease

On June 10, New Jersey Congressman Josh Gottheimer held a press conference on the trails at the West Milford Environmental Center to strongly encourage families to take the threat of tick-borne illnesses and prevention seriously. He and Congressman Chris Smith have introduced bipartisan legislation to secure federal resources to help families facing Lyme crises. The Trail Conference Director of Donor Advising Don Weise opened the conference, sharing that the legislation has the potential to help deter fears that may prevent many from experiencing the benefits of the outdoors.

“The pandemic has proven that people need access to the outdoors to be mentally and physically healthy,” Weise said. “We must be vigilant and check for ticks, but we can’t let Lyme disease keep us locked indoors. [See sidebar for tips on tick-bite prevention.] This legislation gives me hope that we’ll find a cure.”

The event also featured a group of mothers who shared their stories of prolonged battles against Lyme disease in their families. “It’s my goal that families will come enjoy the outdoors here in the Garden State this summer,” Gottheimer said. “I want families to protect themselves from ticks and from the Lyme disease they may carry, all while enjoying the natural beauty we have to offer. And I want our residents and families who’ve been affected by Lyme disease to know I stand with them—to push federal bipartisan action for ward to boost investment in finding new treatments, and to make sure any child with any impairment or disability from this disease can get the educational services and care they need.”

New Jersey has one of the highest rates of Lyme disease in the country. The bills mean federal bipartisan action for ward to boost investment in finding new treatments, and to make sure any child with any impairment or disability from this disease can get the educational services and care they need.

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Jersey is the home of the Hunterdon Hiking Club. Hunterdon County in New Jersey is the home of the Hunterdon Hiking Club. Hunterdon features state, county, and municipal parks, plus protected reserves. Centrally located, Hunterdon is a short drive from the trails of northern and southern New Jersey and parks in nearby New York and Pennsylvania. The abundance of outdoor areas has attracted residents who celebrate being outdoors and have an interest in preserving the land and maintaining its rural nature.

The Hunterdon Hiking Club recently celebrated their 40th anniversary of enjoying the outdoors together. The club started in 1980 as an affiliate of the Hunterdon County Park System and began with one hike a month. Today, they sponsor an outdoor activity almost every day of the week. The activities are categorized to meet differing skill levels; some days are short bike rides or hikes on relatively flat surfaces, others are longer hikes of 4-5 miles over paths in the woods, and others are more challenging hikes of up to 10 miles with steep climbs and rocky trails. In some cases, the hike is a tour of New York City or Philadelphia, with a visit to a museum or other attraction, or a weekend trip to Shenandoah, the Catskills, or the Adirondacks.

The Hunterdon Hiking Club’s outdoor culture is wide-ranging. HHC has continued its relationship with the park system by participating in the parks department’s events on Earth Day and National Trails Day. It maintains trails in the Wallpack Valley and the Musconetcong Gorge, including a section of the Highlands Trail, and every July it sets up a table on the Appalachian Trail and offers fresh food to the thru-hikers—the HHC members get to meet thru-hikers and hear their adventures in exchange for a cold soda and a comfortable chair.

In addition to the outdoor focus, there is a social aspect to the club. Many of the members participate almost weekly in one of the events and have become good friends. After the shorter hikes or rides, members may stop at a little roadside restaurant for lunch and a chat.

The Hunterdon Hiking Club welcomes new members who enjoy the outdoors. HHC is always looking for that new leader who can introduce a new hike, or that person willing to give back through trail maintenance, or just a new member who wants to meet others who share a love of outdoor activity and a love of nature. More information on the club is available at HunterdonHikingClub.org.

Charles Behnken

Hikers' Directory

We welcome new member clubs
Warren County Parks Foundation (warrencountyparksfoundation.com), Hiking Mamas_Wood2Woods (facebook.com/groups/1204893294290298), and Maloufs Mountain Sunset Campgrounds (maloufsmountain.com)!

ADK Long Island
www.adklongisland.org

ADK Mid-Hudson Chapter
www.mihudsonadk.org

ADK Mohican Chapter
www.adkmohican.org

ADK North Jersey Ramapo Chapter
www.hudsonhikers.org

Adventures for Women
www.adventuresforwomen.org

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter
www.amcdev.org

AMC New York North Jersey Chapter
www.amcnj.org

Black Rock Forest Inc.
www.blackrockforest.org

Boy Scout Troop 8, Brooklyn

Canal Society of New Jersey
www.canalessocietynj.org

Catkill 3500 Club
www.catkill3500club.org

Catkill Mountain Club
www.catkillmountainclub.org

Chinese Mountain Club of New York
www.chinesemountainclub.org

Cloister Nature Center Association
www.cloisternaturecenter.org

Dyke Hikes
www.meetup.com/Dyke-Hikes/

East Hampton Trails Preservation Society
www.ehtps.org

Finger Lakes Trail Conference
www.fingerlakestrail.org

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
www.shawangunks.org

German American Hiking Club of New York and New Jersey
www.meetup.com/6AHONYNJ

HikingMamas_wood2woods

Hilltop Conservancy, Inc.
www.hilltopconservancy.org

Hunterdon Hiking Club
www.hunterdonhikingclub.org

Interstate Hiking Club
www.interstatehikingclub.org

Jolly Rovers Trail Crew Inc.
jollyrovers.org

Little Stony Point Citizens Association
www.littletstonypoint.org

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

Manitoga / The Russel Wright Design Center
www.visitmanitoga.org

Monmouth County Park System

Morris County Park Commission
www.morriscountyparks.net

Musconetcong Mountain Conservancy
mmccnynj.org

Nassau Hiking and Outdoor Club
www.nassauhiking.com

The Nature Place Day Camp
thenatureplace.com

NELSON GREENWAY COMMITTEE
www.morrisparks.com

New Jersey Forty Plus Hiking Club
www.njfortyplusclub.org

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

New York Alpine Club
www.nyalaclub.org

New York City Audubon Society, Inc.
www.nycaudubon.org

New York Ramblers
www.nyramblers.org

NJ/BO/Skylands Associates Inc
www.meetup.com/Sundance-Outdoor-Adventure-Society

Teatown Lake Reservation
www.teatown.org

Tenafly Nature Center Association
www.tenaflynaturecenter.org

Thendara Mountain Club
www.thendaramountainclub.org

Town of Lewisboro
www.lewisborown.gov/parksrec

Trail Dames, Inc
www.traildames.com

TriState Ramblers
www.tristateramblers.com

Valley Stream Hiking Club
www.meetup.com/stvclub

Warren County Board of Recreation Commissioners
www.warrenparks.com

Warren County Parks Foundation
www.westcheirstatepark.org

Westchester Mountain Bike Association
www.wmba.org

Westchester Trails Association
www.westcheirstatepark.org

Women About
www.womenabout.org

WWW
www.westhike.com

Can’t find your club? This list includes 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.
Map Updates and More

Our Publications Committee is always busy preparing the next map or book, so even after a busy past year with its fair share of challenges, we are working on several map updates that we hope to make available very soon.

**NORTH JERSEY MAP SET**

A significant update is current- ly in progress, as the maps are being rebuilt from the ground up to include many enhance- ments over the previous edi- tion. A greatly increased scale, expansion from a two-map to four-map set, inclusion of trail mileage numbers, new detailed elevation contour lines, and a new map showing the Appala- chian Trail between High Point and Pochuck Boardwalk are just some of the features that will make this the most sub- stantial update since 2007. The image here of our in-progress draft map illustrates several of these improvements in the Ter- race Pond area of Wawayanda State Park as compared to the previous edition. Stay tuned for expected availability of this new map set that will in- clude 40 parks and preserves and more than 360 miles of trail in northern New Jersey.

**JERSEY HIGHLANDS MAP SET**

A third edition revision is ex- pected to be available this fall or winter, with some signifi- cant trail updates for the area centered on northern Morris County. The previous edition has been out of stock, but some delays and other mapping projects have kept us from making these new maps avail- able. Note that there have been major changes in some parks managed by Morris Coun- ty Park Commission, so you can also check their website (www.morrisparks.net/parks) for updated maps for parks in this area in the meantime.

**HIGHLANDS TRAIL IN NEW JERSEY MAPS**

A new map set featuring the entirety of the Highlands Trail through New Jersey is in de- velopment. Once completed, the new maps will help bring some attention to this long- distance trail that goes through nearly 30 parks in New Jersey and extends for approximately 130 miles within the state.

In addition, we are continu- ing to make improvements to our app maps through the **Avenza Maps** app. This past year, many people sought out nature therapy, trail users discovered our app maps in record numbers, as our sales more than doubled in 2020 compared to the previous year! So we’ll be continuing to add new maps and help people find the maps they need. The app itself will also see several im- provements in the near future to bring more functionality to the app and also make it easier to find maps, so be on the look- out for those enhancements. And lastly, we can always use help spreading the word about these maps and books, so please consider advocating for our publications wher- ever you might see an oppor- tunity to do so! One way you can help is by leaving reviews for our publications, either on our website or even through Amazon.com. (Be sure to use smile.amazon.com to support the Trail Conference!) Reviews can help other potential users make a more informed choice for their trail information re- sources, and it can be as easy as just selecting a star rating with- out a lengthy written review.

If you’d like to learn more about these updates, you can be sure to sign up for our e-mail newsletter at bit.ly/tc-newsletters if you aren’t already a subscriber.

**Shop the AmazonSmile App, Support Trails**

Did you know that you can support the Trail Conference sim- ply by shopping online? When you shop AmazonSmile at smile.amazon. com, the retailer donates a portion of eligible purchas- es to the nonprofit of your choice. (We hope you’ll choose the Trail Confer- ence!) Thanks to you, we received $348.19 from the AmazonSmile Foun- dation for purchases made January 1 through March 31, 2021. Making it even easier to support great trails and healthy ecosystems, AmazonSmile customers can now support the Trail Conference in the Amazon shopping app on iOS and Android mobile phones. Simply follow these instructions to turn on AmazonSmile and start generating donations for the natural areas you love:
1. Open the Amazon Shopping app on your device.
2. Go into the main menu of the Amazon Shopping app and tap into Settings.
3. Tap AmazonSmile and follow the onscreen in- structions to complete the process.

If you do not have the latest version of the Ama- zon Shopping app, update your app. We are grateful for your support!

**Stay Connected!**

**Upcoming Events**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trail Conference Trail Runs: Harriman State Park, NY</td>
<td>July 24</td>
<td>Harriman State Park, NY</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sassquash Festival Race: Harriman State Park, NY</td>
<td>July 31</td>
<td>Harriman State Park, NY</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trail Insider Virtual Webinar: Managing High-Use Trails: Why Trail Stewards are a Necessity in Creating Safe, Sustainable Trails Stewardship</td>
<td>August 11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trail Insider Meet &amp; Greet: Bear Mountain Trail Stewards, Bear Mountain, NY</td>
<td>August 14</td>
<td>Bear Mountain, NY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appreciation Hike: Harriman State Park, NY</td>
<td>August 27</td>
<td>Harriman State Park, NY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appreciation Hike: Terrace Pond Floating Walkway, Wawayanda State Park, NJ</td>
<td>September 18</td>
<td>Wawayanda State Park, NJ</td>
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**Join the Trail Conference, Get Great Deals**

Check out some of the latest Trail Conference Retail Partners and their great member-only discounts. Visit nynjtc. org/retail-partners for full details on all partner discounts.

**Hudson North Cider**

Hudson North Cider is a mission-driven company that works to protect and preserve the trails in the Hudson Valley and be- yond. Ten cents of every gallon sold, in addition to the funds raised at our Taps for Trails pint nights, are donated to the Trail Conference.

hudsonnorthcider.com

**CleanChoice Energy**

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If you do not have the latest version of the Ama- zon Shopping app, update your app. We are grateful for your support!

**CleanChoice Energy**

CleanChoice Energy makes sure all the elec- tricity you use is replen- ished on the grid with 100% wind and solar from your region. Switch to clean energy and they’ll donate 50% to the Trail Conference when you start service.

cleanchoiceenergy.com

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305 Route 17 North
Mahwah, NJ

325 & 2400
libertycarsnj.com

**Stop paying for long-term retail loans**

When you choose 100% Clean Electricity for your home, 50% will be donated to the Trail Conference to protect the lands you love to explore. Scan the code to enroll or contact 1-866-505-1303 with questions.

**Get Great Deals on Subaru, Hyundai, and Genesis Vehicles**

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Liberty Hyundai & Liberty Genesis
305 Route 17 North
Mahwah, NJ

June 2021

nynjtc.org

TRAIL WALKER • NEW YORK-NEW JERSEY TRAIL CONFERENCE

Jeremy Apgar

The Great Out-Doors

Merrell has partnered with artist Jenny Siegfried for an art installation currently on view outside Trail Conference Headquarters in Mahwah, N.J. The installation invites visitors to walk through a doorway entering the beautiful natural surroundings of the great outdoors in two enticing ways. The front of the door depicts a sweeping view of majestic Mt. Tammany located in the Delaware Water Gap. A delightful yellow trail winds through the landscape, highlighting native trees and flowers along the way. The reverse of the door engages visitors to start their own outdoor journey with a scintillating swirl of summer blooming native flowers that could all be spotted just around the next switchback or trail turn. How many can you find? Be sure to post and tag us in your finds using #greatoutdoors, @jennysiegfriedillustrations, @merrell, and @nynjtc.

**Upcoming Events**

Taps for Trails pint nights, Hudson North Cider

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hudsonnorthcider.com
Trail Extension to Help Ease Congestion at Popular Neversink

While the Neversink River Unique Area has become a popular hiking destination in recent years, the stone ruins found in the area date back to the 1800s. Over recent years, the stone ruins of the old dam area have been working with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to build a new section of trail connecting the Blue Trail East to the Skinner Road parking area. The goal is to provide a blue-blazed trail that extends the length of the gorge.

Work on the Blue Trail East extension began in December 2020. Volunteer leader Andy Garrison and DEC Forestor Evan Masten mapped out and flagged the intended route in accordance with the Unit Management Plan for the area.

However, the project has several unique circumstances that make it challenging. The creation of a new trail is meant to disperse visitors to other trailheads. However, the project has several unique circumstances that make it challenging. The creation of a new trail is meant to disperse visitors to other trailheads.

Conservationists protected the gorge from then until it became a park in 1993. Ambrose Monell of International Nickel Company was the first. In his zeal to return Hackledam to nature as quickly as possible, he dismantled the buildings down to their stone foundations.

The Neversink river gorge has always been a soothing escape for the hiker. In the 1800s, they were a place of noisy industry. Dutch-speaking lumbermen built sawmills along every stream. They cleared forest roads so oxen could haul pine logs to the mills. They carried finished boards over Waterboro Mountain to the Delaware and Hudson Canal or to Port Jervis.

And they dreamed big. Overlooking the rushing Neversink, you can imagine the disappointment felt in 1831 by Otto Van Tuyl of Bridgeville. Looking for a short cut to New York markets, he took $10,000 from the state to tame the Neversink by blasting the riverbed and diverting the falls. The Lenape named “mad river” had other ideas. Perhaps Otto watched as the dam was a challenge.

Fly fisherman silently cast their lines from a stone apron built as part of the doomed venture.

The hamlet became known as Hackledam. Ruins of a large water-powered sawmill lie on Wolf Brook where it empties into the Neversink. Two more water-powered mills, choked by a century of rhododendron, also stand on Wolf Brook. Curious hikers and historians are now identifying and liberating these and other forgotten ruins that lie just steps from the trail.

Agricultural censuses tell us that lumberman Elijah Silvius also ran a large farm where he grazed horses, milk cows, and working oxen. He produced hundreds of pounds of butter for sale each year. His neighbors Griffin, brassing-ton, Clark, and Millsapgh grazed cows, sheep, and swine. They grew modest crops of rye, Indian corn, potatoes, buckwheat, oats, and hay.

Near the river lies a large foundation that may have been the “very fine home” of Silvius. Local papers report it burned to the ground in 1897. Perhaps a smaller foundation nearby was his “very fine home” of 1897. Perhaps a smaller foundation nearby was his “very fine home” of Rock Hill.

Over recent years, the Neversink River Unique Area in Rock Hill, N.Y., has become increasingly popular as trail users discover the beautiful falls throughout the gorge. As a result, the most frequently used trailhead, Hackledam Falls Road is continuously overburdened with close to 100 cars on a busy weekend day. To draw users to other parking, Trail Conference volunteers have been working with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to build a new section of trail connecting the Blue Trail East to the Skinner Road parking area. The goal is to provide a blue-blazed trail that extends the length of the gorge.

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Nancy, the Sullivan County Historical Society, and Volunteer Leader Lou Baldanza aspire to the goal of the project: to reconnect the trail to mark key historical sites. Although the idea of historical markers is not new, placing them along the road, historical tours of the area will begin this summer from the Katrina Falls Road trailhead for those who enjoy a bit of history with their hike.

More information on the history of the Neversink can be found on the Rock Hill Business Association website (rockhillny.org/riverhistory), which features a well-done retrospective of the town (from a 1976 printed directory), including Hackledam. The first Hackledam tour will be Saturday, July 17, at 9 a.m. from the Katrina Falls trailhead. Others will follow through July and August. Details and future dates will be posted to the Neversink River Unique Area Facebook group page by July 1. RSVPs will limit attendance to a manageable group.

1. Volunteer Trail Supervisor Lou Baldanza at stone steps to the river, traveled by oxen hauling logs and cut lumber.
2. Stone foundation to a home, likely that of lumber mill owner Sanford Silvius, which burned in 1897.
3. Volunteer Nancy Bachana inside the remains of a building on the western bank of the Neversink.

In 1897. Perhaps a smaller foundation nearby was his “very fine home” of Rock Hill.

A series of wealthy hunters, fishermen, and conservationists protected the gorge from then until it became a park in 1993. Ambrose Monell of International Nickel Company was the first. In his zeal to return Hackledam to nature as quickly as possible, he dismantled the buildings down to their stone foundations.

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