The Trail Conference was named winner of the 2014 New Jersey Environmental Excellence Award in the Environmental Education (Adult-led) category for its Trail University program. The award was presented by the New Jersey Dept. of Environmental Protection.

Trail University classes work to benefit the environment in New Jersey and New York in several ways. They draw new volunteers from the field of outdoor work, support park staff in executing important projects, improve and create access to beautiful natural areas in the states, and serve to minimize user impacts by promoting trail-building skills and projects such as Sustainable Layout and Design.

Trail University workshops often focus on improving existing trails by reducing erosion, keeping sediment out of watersheds and reservoirs, and keeping hikers and recreationalists on a well-defined path to minimize damage caused by wandering off-trail.

In the 12 months from September 2013 to September 2014 (most recent updated period), 263 Trail University attendees contributed 1,132 hours of service in the state of New Jersey, over the course of 32 classes.

Knox Osborn (in backpack with parents Hank and Alexis) Beacon, NY

**How old were you when you took your first hike?** 2 months old. My parents walked me around the Dennings Point Loop Trail in Beacon, NY. I rode in a Baby Bjorn front pack worn by my father.

**What is your favorite trail?** Fishkill Ridge because it’s right in Beacon, where I live, yet it is never crowded and it feels far away.

**What is your favorite trail food?** I love Annie’s Organic Bunnyfruit Snacks!

**What is the most interesting thing you have seen while hiking with your parents?** When I was riding in a backpack worn by my father, the top of the backpack jostled a small branch of a tree and knocked a snake out. The 3-foot garter snake fell through the air and landed at my mother’s feet. She doesn’t like it when snakes fall from the sky.

**What do you like best about trails?** All the great things that you can find along them—leaves and sticks and rocks and dirt! Every time my parents put me on a trail, I toddle over to see what I can find off on the side. I don’t know why they want to keep walking so fast. You can’t find anything that way.

Do you understand your Dad’s job? My father supports volunteers to help protect the woods and improve trails so more people—people like me—will be able to enjoy nature.

We received help in translating Knox’s answers from his father Hank, East Hudson Program Coordinator for the Trail Conference.

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Cowboy Creek Land Preservation Invigorates Highlands Trail Volunteers

By Glenn Oleskak, Trail Chair, Highlands Trail

In 2008, the cards started falling for the Highlands Trail in the Byram area of Sussex County, NJ. There, the original HT route veered over a ridge, through Hudson Farm property, and into the woods, all punctuated by road walks on Route 605, Roseville Road, and Route 206.

The first hurdle came when Hudson Farms cleared woods on a ridge, necessitating a reroute that extended the already lengthy road walk along Route 605. Shortly afterwards, we lost the trail through private lands near Lake Lackawanna. We now had a long road walk north to a long road walk south... to nowhere!

We’d already lost the HT in two areas in New York, resulting in long road walks, and things were looking bleak for the feasibility of the HT remaining a continuous long-distance trail. Highlands Trail Superintendent Adam Rosenberg and I started doing initial scouting and feasibility studies to go around the Byram area completely. This reroute would be a daunting task that would require years of work.

Late one afternoon, Adam and I were returning from one of these scouting trips. I sat in the passenger seat, breathless. ‘The Highlands Trail and I can’t take too many more hits,’ I said. Since taking on the trail, I’d never let setbacks slow me down—instead, I immediately pushed ahead with a work-around. But this time, I came as close as I’ve ever come to giving up entirely on the HT.

‘Why don’t we look into rerouting the trail to the right?’ Adam suggested as we drove north on Route 605.

Adam’s idea led to the largest and eventually the most successful reroute ever on the HT. After getting permission from Hudson Farm and Hopatcong Township, we moved the trail from one ridge to another ridge on the opposite side of the valley. But at the south end of the new ridge, two large parcels were slated for development. Although we had our ridge walk put away on Route 605, we still had a 1.4-mile road walk along Route 605 to the Byram Bike Trail.

Our big break came in 2014, when Trail Conference Executive Director Ed Goodell arranged a meeting between the Land Conservancy (TLC) of New Jersey’s Land Preservation Director Sandy Urgo and our Researcher Sandy Urgo and our Trail Conference Executive Director Ed Goodell arranged a meeting between the Land Conservancy (TLC) of New Jersey’s Land Preservation Director Sandy Urgo and our...
By the time you receive the Spring edition of Trail Walker, we expect to be operating out of our new headquarters at the Darlington Schoolhouse! The address will be 600 Ramapo Valley Road, Mahwah, NJ 07430 (but don’t use it quite yet!); phone and all other contact information will remain the same.

As this edition goes to press, we are developing plans for a ribbon-cutting this Winter (let’s keep our fingers crossed!) and a Grand Opening in the year to welcome our friends and supporters. Plans are also in the works for a celebratory 5K Hike/Run in partnership with the Mahwah Regional Chamber of Commerce.

The event is set for Sunday, May 17, from 7:30 am to 12 noon; online registration will be available in January 2015. Event sponsors may register at http://www.mahwash.com.

As our move-in date and related events approach, watch for details on our website and in E-Walker, our electronic newsletter. Click “Get Our E-newsletter” button on our website if you are not already a subscriber.

We look forward to welcoming and supporting our extended trails community at our soon-to-be-new home at the heart of the New Jersey-New York Highlands!
The Trail Conference has helped to secure protection of 67 acres along the Shawangunk Ridge Trail (SRT) in the towns of New Paltz and Gardiner in Ulster County, NY. The land, adjacent to the 1,500-acre Huckleberry Ridge State Forest and the Shawangunk Ridge Trail, was purchased jointly with the Open Space Institute and facilitated by the Orange County Land Trust (OCLT). The purchase was finalized November 3, 2014.

The Trail Conference-owned parcels on the Ridge have been purchased by the state's Dept. of Environmental Conservation and managed as state forest. The expectation is the same will happen with this and other of our holdings on the Ridge when the land acquisition portion of the Environmental Protection Fund is restored to appropriate levels (see Our View). A more detailed story is posted at nynjtc.org/news/news.

Casino Proposals at Sterling Forest, Harriman-Woodbury

The Trail Conference continued to work with partners to oppose massive casino proposals for the site. In March, the New York Gaming Commission was asked to vote on a proposed casino at Sterling Forest State Park and adjacent to Harriman State Park. New York's Gaming Commission announced the policies for handling state Gaming Commission (DEC) asked us to partner with them to start the Carbonate Conservation Corps, we said Yes to that too. Volunteers are us.

Preserve open space for public access and to protect existing trails! The only real question here is how far can we stretch our dollars? Working with our partners, we stretch them quite a bit, as stories in this issue about Cowboy Creek in New Jersey (page 1) and a newly protected parcel on the Shawangunk Ridge (below) attest.

Make trails a priority on your to-do list and know that Black Rock Forest Preserve, was purchased by OSI from the Preserve and is to be donated to the Palisades Interstate Park Commission (PIPC) for parks with trails, and it attracts more than 300,000 returning visitors annually. That's a lot of interest in hiking, and we feel good that we are meeting the needs of so many. It's an indication of the value we offer to the quality of life in our region. If only those 300,000 visitors would acknowledge our value with a donation or better, their membership. What a game changer that would be.

People ask me, What are the benefits of membership in the Trail Conference? To be honest, if you don’t enjoy getting out in nature, if you never visit a park, or take your family on a walk on a trail, if you are not a hiker, if you don’t enjoy wildlife, if you don’t want to protect the natural world we are given, then the benefits are few to none. Because parks and trails and opportunities to enjoy and enhance the outdoor experience in our region are the benefits of supporting the Trail Conference with your membership. Your investment in us helps us invest in our people and services that preserve and enhance things that you love. Please join us.

—Edw ard Goodell edward@goodell.org Executive Director nynjtc.org

Permanent protection of Black Rock Forest Preserve includes protection of 23 miles of trails.

The easement will assure the permanent protection of Black Rock's prominent open space, significant mature forest, and at least 23 miles of trails, most maintained by Trail Conference volunteers for the benefit of hikers and walkers, who have long been welcome to explore the Preserve. Black Rock Forest Preserve, was purchased by OSI from the Preserve and is to be donated to the Palisades Interstate Park Commission (PIPC) for parks with trails, and it attracts more than 300,000 returning visitors annually. That's a lot of interest in hiking, and we feel good that we are meeting the needs of so many. It's an indication of the value we offer to the quality of life in our region. If only those 300,000 visitors would acknowledge our value with a donation or better, their membership. What a game changer that would be.

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Trail Conference Annual Awards are determined by the Board of Directors upon recommendation by the Volunteer Committee. The following award announcements were made October 18, 2014 at the Annual Meeting in Ossining, NY.

HONORARY LIFE MEMBERSHIP Conveys life member status and the right to vote at Delegate's meetings. Usually given after long (greater than 20) years of extraordinary service to the Trail Conference.

Ron Rosen, Poughkeepsie, NY
Ron has been involved with the Appalachian Trail Conference (ATMC), as President of the Dutchess Putnam AT Management Committee from its inception until 2009. Ron fostered cooperation among maintenance, monitors, and partners, and recruited and retained volunteers. He kept records of hundreds of trail projects, so that “local” volunteers were eligible for the National Park Service’s service awards. When corridor monitors needed to be trained, he developed a workshop that became a model for training for the Appalachian Trail Conservancy. With thirty-seven years of involvement in New York and New Jersey, there was a need to coordinate activities. Ron was the obvious choice to head the coordinating committee. He also became the AT’s liaison to the Mid Atlantic ATC Regional Partnership Committee. ATC continued Honorary Membership to Ron in 2011.

Andrea Garrison, Wurtsboro, NY
Andrea got involved with hiking and volunteering on the Long Path in the Catskills during the mid-1980s. She also did four months of backpacking along the Appalachian Trail from Springer Mountain to Mount Katahdin. Andrea began volunteering with the Trail Conference in 2008, and serves on the Catskill Committee.

Pete & Jo-Anne Senterman, Elka Park, NY
In 1989, starting with the Dutchess-Putnam Appalachian Trail Management Committee (DPAATMC), Pete Senterman began his long history of volunteering. He shifted his focus to the Catskills, eventually stepping up to be the chair of the Catskill Trails Committee and serving for 17 years. Pete recruited hundreds of volunteers, offered training and appreciation events, and developed a deep working relationship with the NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation. His efforts ensured the continued presence of the Trail Conference in the Catskills. Even after retiring as a Trail Chair, Pete continues to represent the Trail Conference. He leads a special projects trail crew, attends public meetings and informational sessions, and serves on the Catskill Park and Forest Preserve Advisory Committee. Pete is truly Mr. Catskill.

Gely and Jakob Franke, Northvale, NJ
The Long Path is Jakob Franke’s “baby” and his wife, Gely, is right there helping behind the scenes. Jakob’s septuagenarian ways fill his aura with smiles and good will and he demonstrates by doing. Gely not only did trail work, but for the Phoenix recrete she volunteered to be the camp cook, preparing home-cooked meals that were ready when the crew returned to camp.

Chris Reyling & the Long Distance Trails Crew
The Long Distance Trails Crew spent many weekends during the last two work seasons on the Long Path in the Catskills. They were the backbone of the multiple weekend service vacations that were spent on the mountains. The entire crew deserves recognition for the work that they did. Flow ering are the core members of the group: Crew Chief Chris Reyling; Crew Leader Erik Garrigues; Crew members David Booth, Marty Costello, Russ Doorman, Bob Fuller, Charyl Morgan.

Eugene Reyes, Passaic, NJ
Highly experienced with both print and digital publication, Eugene Reyes helped pave the way for our e-book publications. He informed the Publications Committee about the production process, then guided it through its first e-book publication, including additional guidance to the designer so that when a book was laid out, it could be more easily converted to the new format.

Steve Weissman, New Brunswick, NJ
Steve puts the “pur” in pro bono. Over the past 10 years, Steve has provided the Trail Conference with countless hours of his professional legal services free of charge. Steve has long been a trusted advisor to the Trail Conference on personnel and legal issues, always available to review and write his client’s counsel, prompt and objective in his response, and always maintaining confidentiality to the utmost.

KEN LLOYD AWARD
This award recognizes members of Trail Conference member clubs or member clubs who have demonstrated exemplary service to Trail maintenance, management, and/or trail land protection. It is usually given after more than seven years of service.

John Moran, Glen Rock, NJ
John has served as North Jersey Trails Chair since 2004, during which time which he has expanded our trail network in the Ramapos dramatically and also helped with the North Jersey map set. John has also developed connections with the park managers, nurtured countless people to take on additional responsibilities, and worked with Eagle Scout candidates to complete their projects.

Ralph’s Peak Hikers Cabin Volunteers Club
For 15 years, the Ralph’s Peak Hikers (RPH) Cabin Volunteers Club, an AT Trail Crew in Dutchess and Putnam Counties, has worked on heavy duty trail projects that are beyond the capacity of the main- tainers. In addition to maintaining the RPH Cabin Shelter, their projects have included punchin, turnpiking, bridges, and steps. In addition, for 15 years they have organized a three-day work weekend with a multi-day BBQ and trail projects suited to all skill levels. This weekend proj ect has attracted local volunteers as well as those coming from a distance.

We give so much thanks to so many people doing so much for the public good.

Pete Tilgner, Tenafly, NJ
Committed to the trails in our region, Pete Tilgner also volunteers with the Trail Conference office operations. Since 2001, Pete has been coming to the office weekly to mail membership cards and free maps. His reliability in this role is matched by his impeccable manners, sense of humor, and appreciation of the hiking opportunities in the region.

NEXT GENERATION AWARD
Given to those under age 21 who are making significant contributions of time and energy to trail building or protection. An awardee may be an individual or a group.

Matt Whitteke, Oakland, NJ
Matt, a 22 year old who when he first volunteered as an Invasives Strike Force intern and fell in love with invasive. For his Eagle project he organized a team to remove invasives and plant native species. He became a certified pesticide applicator and has encouraged adults to volunteer. During the summer of 2014, Matt matriculated at William Paterson University.

Erika Schneider-Smith, Shrewsbury, NJ
Erika signed up to be a member of our Invasives Strike Force in September 2012, at first the effort seemed daunting but Erika was determined to make a difference. During her tenure with our Invasives Strike Force team, in the fall of 2014, Matt matriculated at William Paterson University.

Emma Chilson, Suffern, NY
Emma volunteered as a trail builder for more than 100 hours in 2013, first at Sterling Forest and then at Bear Mountain. An environmental engineer major in her junior year at Cornell University in 2014, Emma continues to volunteer at the office and do trail work on her days off from another internship.

WILLIAM HOFERLING AWARD
Recognizes Trail Conference volunteers who have demonstrated exemplary service to trail maintenance, management, and/or trail land protection.

Cliff Berchtold, Monroe, NY
Volunteering in multiple ways, Cliff Berchtold believes in paying back for the decades he has spent enjoying trails. After maintaining a section of the Scenic Trail (Long Path) in Minnewaska State Park Preserve for 18 years, he now maintains the Townsend Trail in Sterling Forest. Cliff helps with Trail U workshops, was the top surveyor for the Invasives Strike Force (ISF) in 2013, and spends many hours in the Trail Conference office processing ISF data.

Andie Garrison, Wurtsboro, NY
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Dedicated describes Andy Garrison for both his land acquisition efforts for the Shawangunk Ridge Trail (SRT) as well as his work building and maintaining the trail. Andy also has led the effort to reroute the
Long Path in the Catskills to eliminate a road walk. When he leads a work trip, he arrives earlier than the crew members and makes at least one extra trip to bring equipment to the work site. He invited other trail crews to join him and established weekly huckshuck work trips disguised as camping trips. The preparation and detail in planting has made these trips a success. Under Andy’s leadership the new trail was built and opened to the public in only two years.

Salley Decker, Poughkeepsie, NY
Salley has a multiple decade volunteer history with the Conference that includes being an AT maintainer for over 25 years, active participant in the Dutchess/Putnam AT Management Committee, helping with the 2007 ATC biennial meeting hosted by the Trail Conference, and, in 2014, spearheading the local efforts to establish a trail crew for the historic Stone Church Preserve in Dover, NY.

Chet Morris, Branchville, NJ
Chet has been volunteer trail supervisor in Stokes State Forest and Swartwood State Park since 2003. He is more than just a supervisor; as a certified sawyer, he puts his heart and soul into making sure that downed trees are removed immediately. When a call comes in, he grabs his chainsaw and heads out to the trails to help wherever he is needed.

DON DERR AWARD
Recognizes Trail Conference volunteers who have demonstrated exemplary off-trail service such as publications, advocacy, land conservation, development, membership, and office work. It is usually given after more than seven years of outstanding service.

George Petty, Clinton Corners, NY
George, a poet, writer, editor, and retired college professor, has served on the Trail Conference Publications Committee, for a time as chair, since 2001. In addition to being the author of Hiking the Jersey Highlands, George served as project manager and editor of several editions of Hiking Long Island. George’s words of wisdom, dedication, and exceptional commitment to the Publications Committee exemplify the best characteristics of an off-trail volunteer.

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARDS
This award is given by the Volunteer Committee to recognize significant service or a special achievement by Trail Conference volunteers.

Howard “Pete” France, Lake Katrine, NY
Pete has been the Northern Catskills Chair since 2009, tirelessly working to ensure that volunteer supervisors and maintainers have the tools and information they need in order to tackle trail maintenance in the Catskill Park. He’s always been a good team player, excellent with paperwork and follow-up, and has managed to keep trail maintainer vacancies to a minimum throughout his region.

LEO ROTHCHILD CONSERVATION AWARD
Presented to a person or organization that has made a significant contribution to the protection of our trails and/or the natural lands that surround them.

Friends of the Shawangunks
For more than 50 years, the Friends of the Shawangunks (Friends) has exercised vigilance and vigor in preserving the Shawangunk Ridge. The Friends was founded to “marshal public opposition to a proposed “Skyline Drive” along the top of the ridge.” That battle was won as have many since. Friends was a leader of the coalitions that fought to protect Lake Minnewaska, establish Minnewaska State Park Preserve, and add the Awosting Reserve to the park. Friends has successfully challenged many ridge development proposals, protecting the natural environment for us all.

Corporate Partner Award
Given to businesses or their employees for outstanding service to the hiking community.

Rich Weiler, Irvington, NY
Trail maintainer on the Timp-Torne Trail and Appalachian Trail in Harriman State Park for more than 20 years, Rich has also helped to clear countless blow-downs after storm storms and tropical storms and hurricanes of recent years.

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Morgan Outdoors (owner Lisa Lyons)
A small business owner, Lisa Lyons has, since 2011, volunteered her time and her space at Morgan Outdoors in Livingston Manor to promote the Trail Conference and host our workshops and events since 2011. She has recruited volunteers for hikes and trail work and is now the crew chief of the Willowemoc Trail Crew, which is improving the trails in the southwestern Catskills. Lisa’s efforts have given the Trail Conference a presence in a region where we traditionally did not adopt trails.

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Long Distance Trail Crew Celebrates Westmoreland Appalachian Trail Relocation

Saturday, Oct. 18, was a big day for the Long Distance Trails Crew (LDTC). The morning began at the Trail Conference Annual Meeting held in Ossining, NY, where the entire crew received the Paul Leiken Extra Mile Award for its members’ efforts during the last two work seasons on the Long Path relocation in the Catskills.

Following the awards portion of the meeting, the crew headed out to Harriman State Park to put the final touches on the new Appalachian Trail (AT) relocation. This included closing off the old section of the trail, scraping out and painting over the old blazes, and painting the final new blazes at each end of the relocation. The crew also hiked the new trail to make it clearly stand out in the leaf-covered terrain for the subsequent trail work before ribbon-cutting ceremony.

In the afternoon, the crew led a hike to the north (uphill) end of the relocation, first passing by and highlighting previous work by the West Hudson South and Long Distance Trails Crews. The group traveled up the old, eroded trail so everyone could see why the path was being replaced, and arrived at the ribbon-cutting site.

LDTC member Bob Fuller introduced the crew and our distinguished guests: Ed Goodell, Trail Conference Executive Director; Chris Connolly, Trail Conference Board Chair; Ed McGowan, Palisades Interstate Park Commission Science Director; Sonata Mason, West Hudson Program Coordinator; and John Mack, Harriman/Bear Mountain Trails Chair. We talked briefly about the relocation work, which took 10 months to complete with over 35 individuals putting in around 1,800 hours of volunteer time. The new relocation is 4 miles long and is exactly 123 miles longer than the section of trail that it replaces. This is no doubt due to the extensive planning by Crew Chief Chris Reyling, who holds the Long Path End to End certificate number 123, which is a very special number to him.

With the entire LDTC crew behind them, Chris Reyling and Crew Chief Erik Garjost cut the ribbon using a giant pair of scissors created just for this occasion. The hike down the relocation began with crew members pointing out many of the sustainable features of the new trail, as well as the work including steps, massive crib walls, and giant stepping stones.

Then crew and guests enjoyed a celebratory BBQ.

—Bob Fuller, LDTC member

A Better Breakneck By-pass Coming?

On October 28, Trail Conference staff and volunteers met up with trail planners from the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) at the foot of the Wilkinson Trail in the Breakneck Ridge area of Hudson Highlands State Park. Their purpose was to field check possibilities for rerouting a severely eroded section of the popular Breakneck By-pass Trail (red blazed). The group included, left to right: Fred Barnes, volunteer Trail Supervisor for the area; Erik Michelson, Trail Builder; Evan Thompson, Falmouth & HH State Parks; Jesse Jaycox, OPRHP Biologist; and Mary Dodds, volunteer Trail Crew leader and all-around trail worker.

In cooperation with Trail Conference partners, several hikes were set up at key places along the ridge to showcase the area and its ecological and public value. The season started off with a much-needed trail-clipping hike at Graham Fire Tower along the ridge, where the Ravine Trail offers an additional cool and verdant rock scramble alongside the stream. Later in the season, a group picked blueberries and cooled off under the Rainbow Kill Falls at Minnewaska State Park Preserve and enjoyed the long view of the entire length of the ridge, all the way back to New Jersey. Other hikes explored the newest addition to the ridge, Ridgeview Preserve, and climbed up the Shagbark Ridge Trail at Wartwood Ridge State Forest to the peaks of the Catskills and the Bash Kill—the largest wetland in southeastern New York.

A beauty thanks to volunteer Trail Chair Jakob Franke, Laura Center of Minnewaska State Park, Andy Mills of the Orange County Land Trust, and Mike Medley of the Bash Kill Area Association for co-leading these hikes and enriching all with their specialized knowledge of the lands along the Shagbark Ridge! And stay tuned on our website for future events.

—Sonata Mason, West Hudson Program Coordinator

People for Trails, Trails for People.

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

Hiking to Know the Places We Save

Exactly how wilderness areas are preserved is likely a bit of a mystery to the average person. The ongoing efforts to conserve and set aside wild lands for perpetuation and maintenance are often lost on the layperson.

But projects like the ongoing preservation of the Shagbark Pond dealership offer a new perspective on the value of the area. The ridge has an active area for the Trail Conference and an active volunteer crew, as two key components, the Long Path and the Shagbark Pond dealership, depend on each other through the efforts of the community. This requires securing the trail access on private, undeveloped land, as well as acquiring land parcels along the ridge. The Land Trust Alliance recently granted funding to purchase more land parcels in this area, with the stipulation that local communities and municipalities be made aware of the recreation opportunities available to them as a result of this conservation work. In cooperation with Trail Conference partners, several hikes were set up at key places along the ridge to showcase the area and its ecological and public value.

We Take on the Wilderness of NJ

The Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, only 26 miles west of Times Square in New York City, is 12 square miles of largely undisturbed nature straddling the border between Morris and Somerset counties. Its 10 miles of hiking trails vary from primitive cleared walking paths to elaborate boardwalks that span the refuge. The Great Swamp just helped celebrate the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Wilderness Act. The Trail Conference is proud to be invited to help with the planning of the hiking trails in this Wilderness area on the heels of this historic occasion.

Federally designated Wilderness areas are chosen from existing federal lands of at least 5,000 acres which have minimally been impacted by people, and perfect for hiking and exploring. Like many Wilderness areas, the Great Swamp has its brush with annihilation—the refuge was established in 1960 after a year-long legal battle in which local residents fought to keep the land from being turned into a major regional airport. Today on these 7,768 acres, instead of jet airplanes, more than 244 species of birds fill the sky. In addition, 39 mammal species and 42 species of reptiles and amphibians variously crawl, run, and slither across the refuge. Beautiful vernal pools and ponds dot the woods to be appreciated by animals and hikers alike.

We look forward to helping the Great Swamp maintain their trails by bringing in workshops, training, and volunteers over the coming years. Hope to see you out there!

—Peter Dolan, New Jersey Program Coordinator

Hudson Nor’Westers and Hudson North Clippers

The newly formed West Hudson North Clip’Nor Westers crews, both operating under the direction of crew chief Sandy Cacciatore, hit the ground running.

In July, the Nor’Westers began refurbishing and building a new trail, the Hudson North Clipp’Nor, near Palisades Interstate Park. Volunteers in their region. They offer a hand to anyone who has been unable to get to their trail in a weeklong job.

Future plans include rehabilitating a short section, and drainage mitigation in West Rock Forest. Technical trail skills taught on mitigation, stone steps installation, and bog-building workshops.

The Clippers, meanwhile, have made them aware of the region. They offer a hand to anyone who has been able to get to their trail in a weeklong job.

The Clippers go out every second Saturday and clear a challenging trail section. They invite volunteers to join them.

Ground Broken on Long Distance Trails’ New Center

A crowd of about 100 attended the September 3rd groundbreaking ceremony in Mount Tremper, in the central Catskills. Trail for decades, starting from his time as the Trail Conference. The building began this past fall with a grand opening expected in winter 2015.

The CIC will provide information to visitors as they travel over the waterfalls, and ways to recreate and enjoy it. Services include $500,000 from New York Works III, $420,000 in Development grants.

The Friends of the Catskill Interpretive Center are raising funds for the first five years toward operating expenses, and are asking local communities and municipalities to operate the center once constructed. The new center will be open in the next few years toward operating expenses.

Hudson NJ Trail Conference, Catskill Mountain Club

—Peter Dolan, New Jersey Program Coordinator

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A groundbreaking for the Maurice D. Hinchey Catskill Interpretive Center (CIC) along Route 23A in Kaaterskill Clove. An appreciation picnic was held for all Catskill Conservancy Corp. members of our South West crew. Our new program aims to extend our reach to hikers and potential volunteers and to expand the opportunities and skill development available for them.

Breakneck Trail Stewards

The Trail Conference stewards at Breakneck Ridge were on duty weekends and holidays from Memorial Day Weekend through Columbus Day (45 days total). East Hudson Program Coordinator Hank Osborn reports that the stewards counted exactly 26,743 hikers ascending the Breakneck Ridge Trail during that time. They did not count hikers descending or hikers at the other two nearby trailheads. The most hikers counted in one day was 1,426, on Oct. 12, the stewards’ last day of the season. The fewest: 60 on a “terribly” windy and rainy day.

Twice as many hikers showed up the following year, and press releases have been promoting CCC activities since its first workshop, on volunteer leadership training, in June. Work trips tackled trail building at the future site of the Catskill Interpretive Center and litter cleanup at Kaaterskill Falls and along Route 23A in Kaaterskill Clove. An appreciation picnic was held for all Catskill volunteers in October; at the event, we were able to thank many people for their service to trails, lands, and the natural and recreational resources of the Catskill Mountains. Visit the CCC website to learn more and get involved. We will be in touch shortly afterwards with the info you request and will add you to the electronic mailing list for CCC updates. catskillconservationcorps.org

Better Trails to History

In Hudson Highlands State Park

In October, nine acres, a new parking lot, and short trail extension built by the Trail Conference’s Taconics Crew were added to Hudson Highlands State Park historic North/South Redoubt section along Snake Hill Road in Garrison. Land preservationists and state park and Dept. of Environmental Conservation officials celebrated the occasion with a brief ribbon-cutting ceremony before sitting down to a meeting about other conservation priorities.

The land was donated to the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) by Winter Hill LLC, which also built the new parking area. OPRHP Deputy Commissioner Carol Clark and Winter Hill’s Chris Buck signed the transfer papers and cut the ribbon (above) at the event.

With a short and quick climb on a red-blazed trail to the North Redoubt, hikers can get a nice view north over the Hudson River—especially with the leaves off the trees. A longer, but relatively short, hike to the higher South Redoubt winds through hies of Garrison School Forest.

These trails to the South Redoubt are in the process of being reworked and relabeled by the Garrison School, which maintains all the trails in this area of the park. Already, there are differences in blaze colors between the latest 2014 edition of East Hudson map #101 and what you will find on site. The South Redoubt features a kiosk with information about the Revolution-era history of the redoubts, fortifications built in 1779 with the intent of delaying or stopping British advances on West Point. At both North and South Redoubt, evidence of the now buried fortifications is obvious.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM NEW PROGRAMS

Am eriCorps

In 2014, 17 Am eriCorps members engaged by the Trail Conference to learn and do trail building east and west of the Hudson River in New York or serve with our Invasives Strike Force. They contributed 9,548 hours to our parks and trails from May to October. AmeriCorps members contributed approximately 2,500 hours of effort towards our mission during that time, and formed the nucleus of three trail-building crews—the Palisades and Taconics crews, who worked on state park trails in the Palisades, and the Bear Mountain Trails Project crew, working on the Appalachian Trail relocation. Four members also contributed to the monitoring and removal work of our Invasives Strike Force.

Our new programs aim to extend our reach to hikers and potential volunteers and to expand the opportunities and skill development available for them.

Catskill Conservation Corps

Regional Program Coordinator Jeff Johannesen says that 1797 was the last time that a Catskill Interpretive Center and litter cleanup at Kaaterskill Falls and along Route 23A in Kaaterskill Clove. An appreciation picnic was held for all Catskill volunteers in October; at the event, we were able to thank many people for their service to trails, lands, and the natural and recreational resources of the Catskill Mountains. Visit the CCC website to learn more and get involved. We will be in touch shortly afterwards with the info you request and will add you to the electronic mailing list for CCC updates. catskillconservationcorps.org

To make your gift qualify for the match, please make your donation to the New York/New Jersey Trail Conference and designate it to the East Hudson/Breakneck Challenge.

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Alley Pond Environmental Center
www.alleypond.com
AMC Delaware Valley Chapter
www.amdvc.org
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www.amcmohawkadk.org
AMC New York North Jersey Chapter
www.amc-ny.org
Bellvale School
www.bruderhof.com/en/international-directory/united-states/bellvale
Black Rock Forest Consortium Inc.
www.blackrockforest.org
Boy Scout Troop 121-Hudson Valley Council
http://boysscout121.org
Boy Scout Troop 50 Mahwah
MAHW@troop50.scoutleader.com
Boy Scout Troop B, Brooklyn
Boy Scouts of America, Troop 21
Boy Scouts of America - Northern NJ Council
www.njrbsa.org
Byram Township Environmental Commission
www.byratwp.org
Catskill 3500 Club
www.catskill3500club.org
Catskill Mountain Club
www.catskillmountainclub.org
Chinese Mountain Club of New York
www.cmcm.org
Church Communities Foundation
www.bruderhof.com
Closter Nature Center Association
www.closternaturecenter.org
East Coast Greenway Alliance
www.greenwaynj.org
East Hampton Trails Preservation Society
www.ehtps.org
Flat Rock Brook Nature Association
www.flatrockbrook.org
Fox Hill School
www.bruderhof.com/en/international-directory/united-states/fox-hill
Friends of Garrett Mountain
http://friendsofgarrettmountain.blogspot.com
Friends of Pelehan Bay Park
www.pelehambaypark.org/
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www.teaneckgreenway.org
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http://shawangunks.org
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www.interstatehikingclub.org
Jolly Rovers
http://jollyrovers.org
Little Stone Point Citizens Association
www.littlesetonpoint.org
Long Island Greenbelt Trail Conference
www.kgbrook.org
Long Path North Hiking Club
www.scholarhire-conservation.org
Mohon Preserve
www.mohonpreserve.org
Monmouth County Park System
www.mommparks.com
Morris County Park Commission
www.morrisparks.net
Mosaic Outdoor Mountain Club
www.mosaic-ny.org/joomla
Musconetcong Mountain Conservancy
http:// Flrockblue.org
Nassau Hiking and Outdoor Club
www.nassauhiking.org
Nelsonville Greenway Committee
VillageofNelsonville.org
New Haven Hiking Club
www.NHHC.info
New Jersey Search & Rescue Inc.
www.njsar.org
New York Alpine Club
www.nyalpine.com
New York City Audubon Society, Inc.
www.nycaudubon.org
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http://nyh.nynjtc.org
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www.nyramblers.org
Outdoor Promise
www.outdoorpromise.org
Palisades Nature Association
www.palisades.org/greenbrook.htm
Protect Our Wetlands, Water & Woods (POW)
http://box292.blauhost.com/~powworg
Protectors of Pine Oak Woods
www.ppoe.org
Rip Van Winkle Hikers
http://www.newyorkhikers.org/rw
Rock Lodge Club
www.rocklodgeclub.com
RPHC Volunteers
timtrek.mikenith.com
SAJ – Society for the Advancement of Judaism
http://www.thesaj.org
Sall Shakers Trail Running Club
www.sallshakersrun.org
Shorwalkers Inc.
www.shorwalkers.org
Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter Outings Committee
www.newyork.sierraclub.org/outings
Sierra Club Lower Hudson Group
http://www.newyork.sierraclub.org/lh
Sierra Club Mid-Hudson Group
www.newyork.sierraclub.org/midhudson
South Mountain Conservancy Inc.
www.somocsn.org
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http://southamptontrails.org
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http://www.sbp.org
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www.taatow.org
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www.tenafllynaturecenter.org
The Catskill Center for Conservation & Dev.
www.catskillcenter.org
The Highlands Natural Pool
www.highlandsnaturalpool.org
The Nature Place Day Camp
http://thenatureplace.com
The Outdoor Club, Inc.
www.outdoorclubincinfo.com
Thtedara Mountain Club
www.thedaramountainclub.org
Torne Valley Preservation Association
Town of Lewisboro
www.lewisborogov.com/parksrec
Trail WhippAss
www.trailwhippass.com/
trailwhippass@home.com
Tri State Ramblers
http://trsnynjtc.org
Union County Department of Parks & Community Renewal
http://ucrc.org/community-parks-community-renewals/parks-facilities
University Outing Club
www.universityoutingclub.org
Urban Trail Conference, Inc.
www.urbantrail.org
Valley Stream Hiking Club
www.meetup.com/vshclub
Wappingers Greenway Trail Committee
Warren County Morris Canal Committee
www.morriscanal.org
West Milford 12ers
http://www.westshire.com
Westchester Trails Association
www.nytrim.org/clubpages/wtm.html
Women About
www.womenabout.org
WWW
www.westshire.com

Welcome to Our New Member Clubs
Three organizations joined the Trail Conference ranks this fall.

Greenwich Nature Center
http://greenwichnaturecenter.org
The Greenwich Nature Center (GNC) in Scarsdale, NY, is a 33-acre nature preserve with trails, a pond and gardens. More than 70,000 visitors come to the GNC each year. The property is a significant wildlife habitat refuge, both for indigenous species and for the hundreds of species of migratory birds that use it as a resting place on their spring and fall travels. The property includes 30 acres of woodland, two significant wetland sites, and a wildflower meadow, which is used as a nesting area for Eastern box turtles.

Outdoor Promise
http://outdoorpromise.org
Using their school as classroom, Outdoor Promise helps disadvantaged NYC youth discover the wonder and joy of learning by doing. Through hands-on, project-based outdoor education programs, Outdoor Promise aims to prepare the natural leaders of tomorrow.

Trail WhippAss
www.trailwhippass.com/
Approximately 90 members comprise Trail WhippAss, a trail-running club based in the New York and New Jersey area. Members are encouraged to give back by volunteering on the trails, recently, they’ve worked with our Palisades, Bear Mountain, and South Mountain Reservation crews. The club is in the process of adopting a trail to maintain.

To add your organization to the list, contact
Jennis Watson, watson@nynjtc.org.
New York Restricts Sale & Transport of Some Invasive Species

New York State Enacts Much-Needed Support for Invasive Species Control Efforts

By Linda Rohdeier

Many of us know the problems invasive plants cause in our forests and along hiking trails—shrubs like barberry crowding in on the path, vines like oriental bittersweet helping to pull down trees, invasive plants unknotting sidewalks we have used to wonder-ful spring wildflowers.

The Trail Conference’s Invasives Strike Force has been working to combat invasive plants along our trails since 2011. We, along with many other park managers and natural resource professionals across the country, work tirelessly to protect our native biodiversity in parks and natural areas, but we often feel unsupported by many facets of society.

So we go to nurseries and see the very plants we have been removing being sold to unsuspecting homeowners. We go to pet stores and see the invasive aquatic organisms that are decimating our native aquatic habitats being sold for aquariums. We see lists of recommended street trees promoted by the regional shade tree organization that includes species that are popping up as invasive in our forests. We watch garden programs that enthuse over ornamental plants that we know have become invasive in nearby states.

This past September, New York State gave invasive fighters some much-needed legal support for our efforts. The NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation (DEC) issued regulations defining a list of 98 prohibited invasive species (NYCRR, Part 575) that, starting March 10, 2015, will be illegal to sell, introduce, purchase, import, or transport. This means that, as of this spring, many of the invasive plants we see in our forests will no longer be able to travel freely.

Many of the most common invasive species found along our hiking trails will be prohibited—including barberry (pragmatic starting Sept. 10, 2015), oriental bittersweet, Japanese stillgrass, Japanese knotweed, yellow iris, water chestnut, and mosquito fish—commonly sold for water gardens and ponds—will also be prohibited, as well as border vines, one of the shrubs frequently used for hedges. Two species of bamboo were also regulated in the effort to control the problems they cause when they spread between neighboring yards.

Invasives are not allowed to transport prohibited species for the purpose of identification or disposal. For example, if you catch a strange fish in the stream, you are allowed to transport it to an expert to have it identified without fear of having violated the regulations. If you are involved in an invasive plant removal effort, you are allowed to transport and dispose of the removed plants in the trash. In addition, a permit process will be in place to allow use of prohibited species for educational and research purposes.

Some species were deemed too important economically to prohibit outright. These species have been placed on the regulated list. A regulated species may still be sold, but must be accompanied by labeling identifying it as invasive and providing information on how to prevent the species, from becoming introduced into a free-liv- ing state in our natural areas. These regulated species include some well-known landscaping plants, such as Norwegian maple, burning bush, and Chinese silver grass (Miscanthus sinensis), and popular aquatic junks such as red-eared slider (a turtle) and goldfish.

To see the complete regulations along with a full list of prohibited and regulated species, go to http://www.dec.ny.gov/lim nuary/198484.html

Now that New York has passed these regu- lations, we hope that it will inspire similar efforts in New Jersey. Now that there is legis- lation backing our efforts, we hope to see a big difference in the invasive species con- trol work in New York.

Linda Rohdeier is Trail Conference Director of Land Stewardship and Coordinator of the Lower Hudson Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM). The Trail Conference is contracted by the state of New York to lead the Lower Hudson PRISM, which brings together individuals, organizations and agencies working on invasive species to coordinate efforts and strategy in the Lower Hudson Valley. See http://prism.org for more information.

Thru-hiking the Shawangunk Ridge Trail—In less than two days

By Amber Ray

It takes preparation and perseverance to hike the Shawangunk Ridge Trail (SRT), a rugged 73-mile trek that starts on the Appalachian Trail in High Point State Park in New Jersey and runs northward along the dramatic Shawangunk Ridge to Mohonk Preserve in New York. But it takes a special kind of dedication to tackle the entirety of the SRT in one or less than two days.

Ultra-runner Kenneth Posner became the first known person to thru-hike the SRT in May 2014, in 31 hours and 29 minutes. Posner hiked this wild track that weaves past wetlands and waterfalls, climbs over cliffs and rock piles, and runs across uncedented roads.

Posner created the Shawangunk Ridge Trail Run/Hike, an event meant to honor and promote this extraordinary path.

The trail itself, initiated by the Trail Conference in 1989, is a work in progress. The Trail Conference and Shawangunk Ridge Greenway Preservation partners continue to acquire land in the Gunks for permanent protection while maintaining the ridge-length corridor and its connec- tions to other trails along the way. The trail took center stage Sept. 19-21 during the inaugural SRT Run/Hike, which saw 76 participants competing in three divisions: 74-mile, 32-mile, and 20-mile races. Five hearty souls attempted the 74-mile journey from New Jersey’s High Point to Rosendale, NY, where the event ended at a restored railroad trestle high above Rondout Creek. Only one completed the entire trek.

George Gryzb was the sole 74-miler to re- complete the race. Tom Holman from race- director Posner, an award symbolizing “the personal strength and connectedness with the land necessary to complete a challenge of this magnitude.” A 51-year-old electrical and computer engineer who does IT security consulting during the day and “crazy outdoors stuff” in his downtime, Gryzb is no stranger to tough situations in the wilderness—he’s a member of the New Jersey Search and Rescue team, which is a Trail Conference affiliate and through which he maintains a section of trail by the Bearfort Fire Tower in the Pequannock Watershed Area.

Still, Gryzb was “definitely not expecting [the SRT] to be as rugged as it was.” An adventurer who has already ticketed most peak-bagging lists and many long-trail hikes in the Northeast off his list, Gryzb says the demanding SRT Run/Hike rates close to the top of the difficult trails and events he’s taken on.

“The one thing I really, really like about this race is that it wasn’t overwhelming,” says Gryzb, who identifies himself as an “insane long-distance hiker” rather than a trail runner. “I wasn’t like, 10 stops and aid stations left and right—it was actually a low-key, down-to-earth trail run,” he explains. “You better know what the hell you’re doing, you better know how to hydrate yourself, how to take care of your- self, or you’re gonna drop out of the race.”

So how does someone not only prepare to thru-hike the SRT, but do the whole thing in 30 hours, 25 minutes, like Gryzb? It’s “hours and hours and hours and hours and hours and hours and hours and hours and hours and hours.” As long as you’re well-planned, for me, it’s just a matter of getting it done.”

The SRT Run/Hike was sponsored by Bee’s Food, Rock and Snow, and Arena Gymnastics.
myself at the TLC office. The three of us were busy, working through a number of maps of potential properties for acquisition. A number of those acquisitions are in process. Best line when we again began to focus on Cowboy Creek: “I reckon we can rustle up some figs next week to discuss Cowboy Creek, partner!”

“...the deal to acquire property around Cowboy Creek in Sussex County—a significant tract of land for the Highlands Trail—demonstrates the important role played by dedicated members of both organizations working together. We look forward to continuing this work for many years in the future.”

Sandy Ugo, Land Preservation Director of TLC, notes that the project was in the works for many years. “The Cowboy Creek deal includes 305 acres of New Jersey Highlands forest, with the namesake creek traversing the middle of the property. There are vernal pools, extensive granite outcrops, and glacial erratic.

“The Land Conservancy of New Jersey began negotiating with the owners of this very large, forested tract in Hopatcong Borough in 2009 and was finally able to assist the landowner with an offering to the New Jersey Green Acres program in 2010. It took some time, but Green Acres was eventually able to contract the property and closed on the acquisition in February 2014.”

TLC President David Epstein said, “This is stunning conservation land, and we are thrilled to have preserved it after all of this time, and are very grateful to our partners at Green Acres.”

The property sits at the southern end of a major project area for TLC and is a critically important link for the Highlands Trail (HT). “The deal was so highly significant,” says Highland Trail Chair, Adam Rosenberg. “It is a trail head for the popular Black Rock Hollow Trail. The conservation easement eases the long-sought works—the crucial numbers—and be provided for public use in the future, though the con- figuration of trails may be subject to change. In addition to securing long-term pro- tection of the Preserve, Schueter reports that OSI will create a conservation fund, to be co-managed by BRPF, with the goal of protecting additional adjacent parcels that will extend the corridor of protected land toward Schunnemunk Mountain State Park. “A public access fund” will also be established to support the Preserve’s maintenance of parking areas and trails.

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Hiking a path at Cowboy Creek.
Some of the most popular guidebooks from the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference are now available in e-book format! Long a source of reliable, up-to-date information about trails in the region, you can now access select guides on a variety of devices, including e-book readers and many tablets and smartphones. Whether out on the trail, referencing on the go, or about the trails.

Four titles are currently available as e-books on our website:

- Hike of the Week, 1st edition 2013
- Harriman Trails, 3rd edition 2010
- Inn Musse Trail, 1999 (long out of print, now available exclusively as an e-book)
This 3.5-mile loop hike passes by interesting cliffs and a scenic marsh and climbs to a panoramic viewpoint.

On a cool, crisp, sunny November afternoon, 25 people from all walks of life enjoyed a guided hike on a new trail loop at Sterling Forest State Park made possible by the completion of a final section of the Doris Duke Trail. This trail, commissioned by New York State Parks in 2013 and built by volunteers of the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference, now links up with two of the oldest trails in the region: the Allis and the Appalachian Trails.

The day’s hike leaders were Trail Conference’s West Hudson Program Coordinator Sona Mason, West Hudson South Trails Chair (volunteer) John Mack, and volunteer Janet Setter, who combined to explain how trails are built and maintained, and why the land over which they cross must be conserved and protected. Friends of Sterling Forest leader Doc Bayne also supplied a wealth of natural and local history along the way, creating a three-hour journey of discovery for all.

The area is open to all for hiking, and the loop can be followed on our Sterling Forest Trails, Map 100, 2013. Although the Doris Duke Wildlife Preserve is off-limits to hikers, it will depart from the Allis Trail. Follow the DD downhill, on and off an old, eroded woods road (plans are in the works for a re-route off the road). Blazes may be scarce, but just follow the woods road to return to the wooden bridge that you crossed at the start of your hike and then back to the parking area.

Information for this article was provided by Sona Mason, West Hudson Program Coordinator, and Daniel Chazin’s written description of the route, which can be found in full on our website. Go to Find a Hike, scroll to Sterling Forest State Park, and select “Sterling Forest Doris Duke Wildlife Sanctuary.”

The Doris Duke Trail Creates New Loop Hike

By Georgette Weir

The Loop

From the eastern end of the parking area, enter the woods at a triple blaze for the Doris Duke Trail (yellow “DD” logo on white). The trail follows a woods road and soon crosses a wooden footbridge over a stream (built as an Eagle Scout project). About 200 feet beyond the bridge, watch carefully for a double blaze. Turn right at the double blaze, leaving the woods road, and head into the woods on a footpath.

Follow the DD through the woods, passing a magnificent wall of stone and a marsh that is a magnet for wildlife. The route follows a newly sidehilled, sustainable footpath, which rises gradually toward the Sterling Ridge. Before reaching the crest of the ridge, the trail bears left across a seasonal stream crossing. Along the ridge top, the trail heads southwest. You will get a panoramic view from a rock outcrop along the crest trail.

Wildlife-rich marsh at Sterling Forest.

The trail was commissioned by New York State Parks and built by the Trail Conference.

This view may be marred by the rooftops of the Genung Group’s proposed $1.5 billion Sterling Forest Resort casino, if it is approved (we are doing our best to stop it). At a trail junction, follow the now co-aligned DD-Allis-Highlands Trails (DD, dark blue, HT aqua blazes) to the left to a high point, but one that offers no view.

About 0.4 mile from here, the DD trail will depart from the Allis Trail. Follow the DD downhill, on and off an old, eroded woods road (plans are in the works for a re-route off the road). Blazes may be scarce, but just follow the woods road to return to the wooden bridge that you crossed at the start of your hike and then back to the parking area.

Information for this article was provided by Sona Mason, West Hudson Program Coordinator, and Daniel Chazin’s written description of the route, which can be found in full on our website. Go to Find a Hike, scroll to Sterling Forest State Park, and select “Sterling Forest Doris Duke Wildlife Sanctuary.”

Featured Hike

Doris Duke Trail

Creates New Loop Hike

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